EVERY LAST BIT OF YOU

by

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B.Ed., The University of British Columbia, 2010

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Abstract

*Every Last Bit of You* is a realistic fiction novel employing an alternative narrative format. Profiles, passwords, wall posts, chats, and private messages tell the story of fifteen-year-old Hailey Milner, and sixteen-year-old Noah Huntington. This young adolescent novel explores the themes of grief and obsession through interconnecting communications of several characters, illustrating problems faced by modern teens such as Internet stalking and family difficulties, and ultimately leading the reader through a journey of reconstruction.

Hailey Milner, born and raised in Victoria, BC, is having a rough year at school, ignoring invitations from her best friend, Sophia, and struggling to make sense of her family’s changing circumstances. And what more could she possibly take on? A recommendation from the school’s counselor suggests joining the school’s badminton team.

Moving from Calgary, AB, Noah and his twin brother, Jack, arrive at school in the middle of the spring term. The last thing on this sporty jock’s mind is playing badminton. But when Noah discovers it’s the only school team left this year, he tries out.

Hailey’s ‘safe space’ in these hard months is writing to her older sister, Zoe, that is, until Hailey and Noah are partnered in the mixed doubles on the badminton team. Hailey’s year finally starts to look up when a tentative friendship develops between her and Noah. Hailey senses that Noah has some family secrets of his own and she sees the potential for a fresh start for herself. Could their friendship possibly mean more?

Hailey’s daydreams burst when she discovers that Noah is not likely to reciprocate her feelings. This event, compounding her original problems, drives Hailey into a grief-induced obsession over Noah, which soon gives way to full-out Facebook stalking.

On the anniversary of a significant event, the root of Hailey’s grief becomes fodder for the News Feed on Facebook. But Hailey soon learns that not all public news is bad news. At the same time, Noah’s home life is also in flux, and through his muddled friendship with Hailey, he gains an appreciation for what, or rather *who*, matters in life.
Preface

This thesis is an original, unpublished, intellectual product of the author, Dorothea Jane Wilson-Scorgie. Rhea Tregebov was the supervising professor on this creative project and was consulted regarding manuscript edits.
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### List of Abbreviations

The following list of abbreviations, appearing in alphabetical order, attributes a meaning to each Facebook-inspired abbreviation.

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Com</td>
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<td>PM</td>
<td>Private Message</td>
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<td>SU</td>
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<td>W</td>
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Acknowledgements

I owe a very special thank you to Professor Rhea Tregebov, my thesis supervisor, who managed to oversee this entire project from another city. It seems fitting for a manuscript about online communication that we met over Skype for our monthly meetings. Rhea’s organizational expertise aided in keeping me on track during the project, and demonstrated by example the processes involved in being a dedicated and professional writer. Furthermore, Rhea’s feedback inspired me to analyze my work and strengthened my skills for revision.

I would also like to thank my thesis committee members, Judith Saltman and Linda Svendsen, for their encouragement and commentary on this project.

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Also, thank you to Maggie de Vries whose creative writing course provided a safe space for imaginative invention, and to my fellow CRWR 503 classmates whose initial excitement in my first prototype encouraged me to take this project further.

Finally, last but certainly not least, I would like to thank my family. I could not have completed this thesis without the love and support of my parents, so a heartfelt thank you to David Scorgie and Doris Wilson. Their lifelong appreciation for higher education has continuously encouraged me to aspire to great accomplishments. They have always shown interest in my creative ideas, which enabled me to have the confidence to give this project a try. Thank you to my older brother, Mike, for his moral support and for teaching me first-hand what it’s like to be the sibling of the “cool kid” in high school. And thank you to Steve, my other half, for being there and listening to my story-related ramblings, even when it’s “not his thing,” and for helping me cope through stressful times. Finally, thank you to Phoebe, my miniature dachshund puppy, who sat on my lap through it all, snuggling and providing me with the much needed physical presence in order to work late into the night.
Dedication

To my parents, Doris Wilson and David Scorgie.
Chapter 1

Hailey’s Log In:

Welcome to Facebook! Please sign in.
Email: haileyscomet@gotmail.com
Password: MilnerGirl_15

Pro:

Hailey Milner


Favourite Quotations:

“For some moments in life, there are no words.” – David Seltzer, Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.

“Of two sisters, one is always the watcher, one the dancer.” – Louise Glück

Favourite Sport: Walking at night.

Arts and Entertainment:

Favourite Music: Arcade Fire, Sam Roberts, Devendra Banhart, Blind Pilot, Bon Iver.

Activities and Interests:
Interests: Fiction, Art, Music, Rain, Ocean.
Other Pages/Groups: Outdoor Movie events, Nirvana Yoga, Mount Tolmie Advisory 52.

Basic Information:
About You: I found my own island, climbed along the jetty, out into the ocean. The thrill faded quickly; it was desolate. I looked back across at the shore: it will never be the same.

Interested in: Men
Relationship Status: Single
Sex: Female
Email: haileyscomet@gotmail.com

Relationships:
Gloria Milner (mother) - *Little Fox Books (owner)*
Zoe Milner (sister) - *McGill University*
Zachary Milner-Kotez (cousin) – *Hillside Middle School*

Friends (326)

NF:
Layla Thompson: Mount Tolmie Tigers’ senior girls basketball team wins PROVINCIALS!! 115 – 98. Boohoo Ross Bay Beavers! I ♥ Mt. Tolmie Secondary!
[February 25 at 8:48 pm]

+ Sophia Baron, Neil Scott, John Stevenson and 28 others like this.

Com:

Liam Mann: You kicked butt, Layla!
[February 25 at 9:54 pm]
Isabella Smith and Sophia Baron are now friends.
[February 25 at 10:03 pm]

Emily Hannok, and 3 others were tagged in Isabella Smith’s photo album: “Take that Ross Bay Beavers!”
[February 25 at 10:05 pm]

Chat:

SOPHIA

Hi Hails, you alright?  [10:27 pm]

HAILEY

I’m OK, why?  [10:27 pm]

SOPHIA

Nothin’ in particular. Just thought you were coming to the game this afternoon.  [10:28 pm]

HAILEY

Right, I know I said I’d go. Sorry.  [10:31 pm]

SOPHIA

Remember last year we went to all the games together -- I don’t think we even missed one! Kinda makes me feel nostalgic for grade 9.  [10:32 pm]

Remember we even made cardboard signs?! Wow, we were dorks!  [10:33 pm]

HAILEY

I didn’t go today because I didn’t feel like making small talk with you and Olivia.  [10:36 pm]

SOPHIA

Oh.  [10:38 pm]

HAILEY

So, we won?  [10:44 pm]
SOPHIA

Yeah, Hails, we won. [10:46 pm]

I wish I could play basketball like that. How come I had to get such graceful, thin arms? [10:47 pm]

No laughs?... ‘Cause, I’m being sarcastic. [10:49 pm]

HAILEY

Ha. Yeah, I get it. [10:50 pm]

SOPHIA

I thought maybe you’d be playing on the team this year. What with your ridiculously tall legs for a 15-year-old. [10:50 pm]

Not that I’m jealous or anything. Haha. [10:50 pm]

You know, follow in the Milner footsteps. [10:52 pm]

HAILEY

Well, I didn’t. [10:56 pm]

SOPHIA

Think you’ll play next year? [10:57 pm]

HAILEY

Not likely. [10:58 pm]

SOPHIA

What about badminton? It’s starting up soon. [11:00 pm]
We could do it together. [11:01 pm]

HAILEY

No, Sophia. I don’t want to. [11:04 pm]

SOPHIA

Look Hails, I know things are different this year... [11:06 pm]

HAILEY

Soph, drop it. [11:06 pm]

SOPHIA

But you used to like school stuff. [11:07 pm]
HAILEY

I said drop it, okay?  [11:09 pm]

SOPHIA

Hailey, I’m only trying to be a friend.  [11:10 pm]

HAILEY

Well, stop it then.  [11:10 pm]

I don’t need your help.  [11:11 pm]

SOPHIA

It’s just that we haven’t seen much of each other this year.  [11:15 pm]


I miss you.  [11:24 pm]

---

SU:

Hailey Milner: Rain, rain, go away… I mean I would like to go outside for walk sometime in the near future.

[February 25 at 11:31 pm]

Com:

Olivia Johnston: Yeah, nine days is a bit much! My club soccer match got cancelled this morning because of rain. ☂️ I mean, really? This is Victoria! You can’t just cancel things because of rain, otherwise nothing would ever get done for like eight months of the year! LOL.

[February 25 at 11:33 pm]

Kyle Ritchie: I guess that’s the price we pay for living on an island off the west coast. And I certainly don’t hear anyone complaining about the green grass we get all year. :P

[February 25 at 11:36 pm]

Gloria Milner: Hailey, do we need to get you some new rubber boots? – Mom.

[February 25 at 11:42 pm]

Kyle Ritchie: Yeah, you could get some sweet booties with little yellow ducks on them. :P

[February 25 at 11:45 pm]

Hailey Milner: Put a sock in it, Kyle.

[February 25 at 11:46 pm]
PM to Zoe Milner:

[February 25 at 11:56 pm]

I hate going to sleep. It’s the same every night. Dreaming that I’m caught in a whirlpool in the ocean. And I don’t care.

Turning and turning, getting dragged in further and further. There are rescue boats standing by, but I’m looking at the bottom of the ocean floor, fixated on that central, circular point of no return. Mom’s on the deck of a boat panicking and throwing orange life preservers to me. Dad’s on another boat somewhere, I’m sure, under the deck maybe, under the water line in his own way.

Sophia is on one too; she keeps leaning out of her boat trying catch my hand. But I’m not looking to get out.

Where’s your boat, Zuzu?

Log Out
Chapter 2

Noah’s Log In:

Welcome to Facebook! Please sign in.
Email: bballerNoah@gotmail.com
Password: sportsdude95

Pro:

Noah Huntington


Favourite Sports: Basketball, Hockey, Snowboarding, ANY SPORT!

Arts and Entertainment:

Favourite Music: LMFAO, The Balconies
Favourite TV Shows: Hockey Night in Canada

Activities and Interests:

Interests: Sports, Basketball, Hockey, Lacrosse, Rugby, Football, Soccer, Snowboarding.
Other Pages/Groups: TSN, LAME pranks, Red Bull Challenge.

Political Views: Conservative (I did grow up in Alberta)
Religious Views: Protestant
Basic Information:
About You: Give me a ball, bat, or stick to hit, and I’m on it.
Interested in: Women
Relationship Status: Single
Sex: Male
Email: bballerNoah@gotmail.com

Relationships:
Jack Huntington (brother) – Mount Tolmie Secondary

Friends (857)

W:

Noah Huntington recently changed his current city to Victoria, British Columbia.
[February 26 at 3:14 pm]

Jordan Mitchell: Hey Noah, we’ve got our last rec bball game on Wednesday at 7 pm. You still in town for that, bro?
[February 26 at 4:32 pm]

Com:
Noah Huntington: Already gone.
[February 26 at 4:37 pm]

Jordan Mitchell: What? This sucks. The team NEEDS you.
[February 26 at 4:54 pm]

Noah Huntington: Sorry dude, but it’s a done deal…
[February 26 at 4:55 pm]
SU:

[February 26 at 5:30 pm]

+ Alec Payne, Cody Charles, and Brooklyn Pitt like this.

Com:

Owen Richardson: Awesome man, can’t wait to visit… whenever that is.
[February 26 at 6:03 pm]

That attic loft would have been a good place for studying… just saying.
[February 26 at 6:31 pm]

Noah Huntington: Gotta love dibs. Sorry, bro.
[February 26 at 6:33 pm]

Samantha Sherry: You guys are funny. You know this is public, right?
[February 26 at 6:46 pm]

Chat:

JACK

Mom says dinner is in 20 minutes. [6:55 pm]

NOAH

You couldn’t just call up the stairs? [6:55 pm]

JACK

I felt that you must be online. Guess it was my “twin” sense. Haha. [6:56 pm]

NOAH

K… (your weird btw, bro) [6:56 pm]

JACK

Correction: *you’re* [6:56 pm]

NOAH

Stop it, dude. [6:57 pm]
JACK

Face it: I’m the smart twin.  [6:57 pm]

NOAH

Whatever makes you feel better for not getting the attic loft.  [6:59 pm]

Listen, if you want, I’ll trade you rooms at Dad’s.  [7:03 pm]

JACK

:(  [7:06 pm]

NOAH

See ya in 5.  [7:10 pm]

Log Out
Chapter 3

Hailey’s Log in:

NF:

Hailey Milner, Isabella Smith, Sophia Baron, Layla Thompson, Kyle Ritchie, and Noah Huntington are attending MOUNT TOLMIE TIGERS’ BADMINTON TRYOUTS on Friday at Mount Tolmie Secondary - West Gym.

[March 1 at 4:20 pm]

Chat:

SOPHIA

Hey you! Saw you coming out of the office today after third block. I called you, but guess you didn’t hear me.  [5:36 pm]

HAILEY

I was in a hurry.  [5:37 pm]

SOPHIA

Oh, OK.  [5:37 pm]

What were you doing there during block 3? Don’t you have Bouchard for English?  [5:39 pm]

HAILEY

Yeah, but I had a “meeting” with Mr. Mitchell.  [5:42 pm]

SOPHIA

The counselor?  [5:42 pm]

HAILEY

Yeah.  [5:42 pm]

SOPHIA

So… what’s up?  [5:46 pm]
HAILEY

😊 [5:46 pm]

SOPHIA

OK, sorry. [5:46 pm]
You don’t have to say it. [5:47 pm]
I saw you signed up for badminton tryouts. That should be fun! [5:52 pm]

HAILEY

That wasn’t me. [5:53 pm]
That was ALL Mr. Mitchell’s idea. He thinks I need to be “more involved” at school. [5:54 pm]
I said fine just to get out of there. [5:54 pm]
Ugh. At dinner tonight my mom was going on and on about Mr. Mitchell’s advice, all the while jabbing the air with a fork full of pasta in the direction of my dad who just sat there picking at his plate, nodding abstractly at whatever my mom was saying. I scarfed down my spaghetti and got out of there fast. [5:55 pm]

SOPHIA

So it sounds like good advice… [5:58 pm]

HAILEY

I’m not going to go, Soph. [5:58 pm]

SOPHIA

What?! [5:59 pm]
Hails, you should. [5:59 pm]
Lots of us will be there. Olivia, me, Emily, and some of the guys, too! [6:00 pm]
It’s co-ed! [6:01 pm]

HAILEY

I’ll think about it. [6:04 pm]

SOPHIA

😊 [6:04 pm]
HAILEY

Maybe, Soph.  [6:05 pm]

SOPHIA

Maybe is half a yes.  [6:05 pm]

HAILEY

Don’t get your hopes up.  [6:09 pm]

Log Out

---

Hailey’s Log in:

PM to Zoe Milner:

[March 3 at 9:46 pm]

I went to the badminton tryouts yesterday. The whole thing was a hazy blur. There I was, but I wasn’t there. I just didn’t fit there.

So many people running and moving, it made me dizzy. I just stood in the middle of the court and let my eyes go out of focus. Missed every shot. On purpose. Each one a small rebellion against Mr. Mitchell.

The whole thing was some kind of ironic joke. At the end of the tryout, Coach Sanders announced the team: I didn’t even try… and I made the team. This has Mr. Mitchell written all over it.
After the whole ordeal was over and I was waiting for Mom to come pick me up, I noticed this guy sitting on the front steps by the gym with his back to me. He riffled through his duffle bag, and then took a sip of his water bottle. He squatted there, shoulders slumped forward, staring at the wall. Then, when Emily and Olivia walked over, he immediately spun around, straightened up, and plastered a “happy” mask onto his face… For some reason, I want to meet him, the boy behind the mask.

When Mom finally arrived, I jumped into the passenger’s seat. She reached across the car and brushed my bangs out of my eyes. Instinctively, I recoiled. Flopping my bangs back over my face, I took one more look out the window at the boy sitting on the steps, then I turned to her with a smiling mask of my own. “It was fun,” I lied.

Maybe I’ll go to just one practice…

Chat:

SOPHIA

Congrats, Hails. [10:22 pm]

HAILEY

Huh? [10:24 pm]

SOPHIA

You made the team. I’m happy for you. [10:24 pm]

HAILEY

I had nothing to do with it. And it didn’t look like Coach Sanders was all too pleased to have me on the team. [10:27 pm]

You can thank Mr. Mitchell, I think. [10:28 pm]

I guess we’ll be seeing more of each other now. [10:32 pm]
SOPHIA
Not quite. [10:33 pm]
I didn’t make the cut. [10:33 pm]

HAILEY
What?! [10:33 pm]
But you actually want to play badminton. [10:34 pm]

SOPHIA
Believe me, I know. [10:34 pm]
Not everyone has a Mr. Mitchell to bribe the coach. [10:37 pm]

HAILEY
It’s not like I asked him to do this, Soph. [10:37 pm]
Take the spot. [10:39 pm]
I don’t care. [10:39 pm]

SOPHIA
I wish. [10:39 pm]
Agh! But maybe Mr. Mitchell is right, Hails. [10:40 pm]

HAILEY
‘bout what? [10:41 pm]

SOPHIA
About how much you need to be on this team. [10:43 pm]

HAILEY
I don’t need anything! [10:44 pm]
And I especially don’t need a pity party coming from you. [10:44 pm]

SOPHIA
A pity party? [10:45 pm]
Is that what you think this is? [10:45 pm]
You know what, Hails? You go ahead and enjoy being on the team. Good luck. [10:49 pm]

HAILEY
Oh yeah, well, maybe I will. [10:49 pm]

Soph? [11:07 pm]

Log Out
Chapter 4

Hailey’s Log In:

N:
Emily Hannok has invited you to join the group the Mount Tolmie Tigers Badminton Team (2012).
[March 5 at 3:11pm]

NF:
Hailey Milner, Sam Jones, Kyle Ritchie, Noah Huntington, Layla Thompson and 3 others
have joined the group Mount Tolmie Tigers Badminton Team (2012).
[March 5 at 3:58 pm]

GP:
Layla Thompson: Coach asked me to post this on the group page:
Welcome to the 2012 Badminton team! We have a dynamic co-ed group of students (4
boys and 4 girls) playing on the team this year.

Practices will be held in the West Gym every Tuesday and Thursday after school (until
4:45). I will also set up a fun drop-in session on Fridays at lunch for the team and any
other students who wish to pop in. All team matches will be held on Friday afternoons.

Just a small reminder that attendance at all practices (except Friday drop-in) is mandatory
for badminton team members. We had many students interested in badminton this season,
so replacements can easily be made.

With that said, congratulations on making the team and see you on court on Tuesday!
-- Coach Sanders

P.S. Please “like” this post to indicate that you have read the “welcome” message.
[March 5 at 5:02 pm]

Log Out
Noah’s Log In:

SU:

Bird’s the word

[March 5 at 8:17 pm]

Com:

Cody Charles: ?? new gf?!
[March 5 at 8:19 pm] (8 likes)

Ellen Jones: Wow. Didn’t take you long, Noah!
[March 5 at 9:44 pm]

Jordan Mitchell: Fitting right in… Just like old times. LOL.
[March 5 at 9:59 pm]

Jack Huntington: Oh, I’d like to see where this is heading…
[March 5 at 10:41 pm]

Joyce Potter: Congrats!
[March 5 at 11:26 pm]

Noah Huntington: LOL, not THAT kind of bird. I’m playing on the school badminton team.
[March 6 at 7:12 am]

Noah Huntington: And thanks a lot Jack for clearing this up when you saw this YESTERDAY.
[March 6 at 7:13 am] (6 likes)

Chat:

JORDAN

So, you’ve switched from basketball to badminton, eh?  [7:19 am]

A bit of a step down, no?  [7:19 am]

NOAH

Haha! Yeah, man. Only cool thing to do in this city. LOL.  [7:20 am]

JORDAN

I take it Jack didn’t make the team?  [7:20 am]
NOAH

He didn’t try out. You know, not his thing.   [7:21 am]

JORDAN

So what’s he up to then?   [7:21 am]

NOAH

Man, I dunno. He hardly ever leaves his room.   [7:21 am]

JORDAN

Studying?   [7:22 am]

NOAH

More like moping.   [7:22 am]

As much as I hate our move, he hates it more.   [7:23 am]

JORDAN

I get it, man. One moment you were here, the next you were gone.   [7:24 am]

Everyone thought you’d wait out the term at least.   [7:24 am]

NOAH

It seemed like as soon as my mom had the custody papers in her hand, that was it. Three weeks ago when we came home after school, there was a moving truck outside our house. That’s all the notice Jack and I got.   [7:26 am]

JORDAN

I would’ve lost it.   [7:27 am]

NOAH

Yeah, Jack kinda did. He made a huge fuss, said he wasn’t leaving and all that. But then our dad told him he had to go with her.   [7:27 am]

JORDAN

That’s messed up.   [7:28 am]

NOAH

You’re telling me.   [7:28 am]

Anyway, man, I gotta go shower before school.   [7:29 am]
JORDAN

Nice, keeping things fresh. [7:30 am]

NOAH

Haha, shut up, man. [7:30 am]

JORDAN

Later. [7:30 am]

NOAH

Peace. [7:31 am]

Log Out

Hailey’s Log In:

N:

Friendship Request: Noah Huntington would like to be friends.
[March 6 at 8:19 pm]

NF:

Hailey Milner is now friends with Noah Huntington.
[March 6 at 9:53 pm]

N:

Noah Huntington posted on your Wall.
[March 6 at 9:56 pm]

W:

Noah Huntington: Howdy partner.
[March 6 at 9:56 pm]
Chat:

NOAH

Do you get it? [10:01 pm]

“Howdy partner.” [10:01 pm]

‘Cause we’re partners for the mixed doubles. ;) [10:02 pm]

HAILEY

Right. [10:02 pm]

It’s a laugh riot. [10:02 pm]

NOAH

So… you think I’m funny? ☺️ [10:03 pm]

Or… not? [10:04 pm]

HAILEY

Uhhhh… [10:05 pm]

NOAH

☺️ [10:05 pm]

Sorry for hogging the court today. [10:10 pm]

HAILEY

Fine by me. [10:10 pm]

NOAH

It’s just that I’m used to playing basketball. [10:11 pm]

I play point guard. [10:11 pm]

HAILEY

So… you’re not a badminton fan either? [10:12 pm]

NOAH

Nah. [10:13 pm]

When we moved to Victoria a couple weeks ago from Calgary, the school office said, other than girls’ field hockey in May, that badminton was the only sport left for boys this year. [10:13 pm]

And I wanted to meet some sporty girls. ;) [10:14 pm]
HAILEY
Well, no one would call me a “sporty girl” these days. [10:15 am]

Better keep looking. [10:15 pm]

NOAH
Ouch. [10:16 pm]

OK, “Miss Sunshine.” [10:16 pm]

See ya at practice. [10:16 pm]

Log Out

Noah’s Log In:

Pro:
Noah changed his profile picture.
[March 9 at 1:33 pm]

+ 9 people like this.

Com:
Jack Huntington: I can’t believe that MOM took this pic. You’re throwing a basketball AT my head. There’s good parenting for you.
[March 9 at 1:36 pm] (4 likes)

Sharon Huntington: I’ve tried to get good pics of my boys, and this was the best you guys could do. So sue me.
[March 9 at 1:44 pm]

Jack Huntington: Thanks… Mom 😊 Don’t you have enough legal battles already?
[March 9 at 1:45 pm]

Noah Huntington: Whoa, Jack. Can’t you see how funny this pic is now?
[March 9 at 1:45 pm]

Jack Huntington: Never.
[March 9 at 1:47 pm]

Sharon Huntington: Btw, why are you boys online during school?
[March 9 at 1:56 pm]
Chat:

NOAH
Why does she ALWAYS have to be on our case? [2:03 pm]
I mean, give us a break! We’re already behind in classes because she forced us to start a new school MID-term. Ugh! [2:03 pm]

JACK
You’re preaching to the choir, bro. [2:04 pm]

NOAH
Who in their right mind does that to their kids? [2:05 pm]
She couldn’t have waited, I dunno, like 4 months? And moved us in the summer, like normal people do. [2:06 pm]

JACK
Believe me, dude, I’ve been wondering the same thing. All I’ve been able to get out of her is that it had something to do with the house deal -- closing dates or something. I don’t know… she said it’s “grown-up” stuff. [2:08 pm]

So… who was that girl you were talking to by the gym after lunch? [2:11 pm]

NOAH
My doubles partner. Never mind. [2:13 pm]

JACK
You know you’re going to tell me. Might as well just tell me now and cut out all this inane banter. [2:14 pm]
NOAH

JACK
Oh, that comment right there is too funny. I could tell you why. But alas, you won’t get it. For shame.  [2:20 pm]

NOAH
OK?  [2:23 pm]
Dude, if you keep on like this, I’m not gonna talk to you anymore.  [2:23 pm]

JACK
Fine. LCD: S’up, brah. Who’s dat babe you were hustlin’?  [2:25 pm]

NOAH
Go away.  [2:26 pm]

Log Out

Hailey’s Log In:

GP:
Emily Hannok: Don’t forget to invite all your friends to come and cheer for us at the badminton courts on Friday! 4:30 sharp! First match of the season! Go Tigers!
[March 14 at 7:31 pm]
+ Noah Huntington likes this.

SU:
Hailey Milner: About half an hour ago eating a whole bag of licorice Nibs seemed like a good idea…
[March 14 at 7:36 pm]

Com:
Sophia Baron: Oh, Hails. NOOOOO! 😄
[March 14 at 7:41 pm]

Kyle Ritchie: Bahahahaha!
[March 14 at 7:44 pm]
Chat:

NOAH
Hey Hailey, you online?  [8:13 pm]

HAILEY
Yeah, sorta.  [8:13 pm]
I was just about to start some math homework… but I guess it can wait.  [8:14 pm]
What’s up?  [8:14 pm]

NOAH
If you’re busy…  [8:14 pm]

HAILEY
Nah, it’s okay. What is it?  [8:15 pm]

NOAH
Everything.  [8:15 pm]
دارة [8:15 pm]

HAILEY
Give yourself a break. It can be tough to be the new kid.  [8:16 pm]

NOAH
Yeah, but it’s not only that. You know this first hand?  [8:17 pm]

HAILEY
Well, no.  [8:17 pm]
I’ve been going to school with the same people my WHOLE life.  [8:18 pm]

NOAH
Really? I just figured that you were new too, ‘cause I don’t really see you hanging out with anyone at school.  [8:18 pm]

HAILEY
I just don’t, OK?  [8:18 pm]
We were talking about you, remember?  [8:19 pm]
NOAH

Right… OK.  [8:20 pm]

It’s nothing really, it’s just my mom. I don’t know if she’s actually trying to ruin my life, or if that it’s just the byproduct of an experiment she’s conducting. Either way, she’s doing a pretty good job of it.  [8:22 pm]

HAILEY

I’ve got a mom like that, too.  [8:23 pm]

NOAH

Really? What’s yours done to you?  [8:23 pm]

HAILEY

Haha.  [8:23 pm]

Well, she’s kinda insane about “checking in.” I have to call or text her like every three hours just to “make sure” things are OK.  [8:24 pm]

NOAH

Wow.  [8:24 pm]

That’s intense.  [8:24 pm]

I was only gonna complain that my mom decided not to get cable TV at our new house, which was going to be the worse thing in the world…  [8:25 pm]

But now, your mom almost makes me feel like my mom’s not so bad!  [8:25 pm]

HAILEY

Hey!  [8:25 pm]

NOAH

Thanks, Hails.  [8:26 pm]

;)  [8:26 pm]

HAILEY

Sure… anytime…  [8:27 pm]

NOAH

LOL.  [8:27 pm]

Log Out
Hailey’s Log In:

GP:
Isabella Smith: posted for Coach Sanders

Mount Tolmie Tigers Badminton Team (2012) – Recent results
Mt. Tolmie Tigers (MTT) vs Cadboro Bay Badgers (CBB) (Matches: 4 –1, Games: 9 – 3)

Women’s Singles:
Layla Thompson (MTT) bt. Ava Evans (CBB): 21-16, 21-14 (2-0), 24 min.

Men’s Singles:

Women’s Doubles:
Emily Hannok and Isabella Smith (MTT) bt. Lynn James and Heather Smart (CBB): 21-11, 11-2 Retired (2-0), 14 min.

Men’s Doubles:
Sam Jones and Trevor Jacobs (MTT) bt. Scott Mantum and Cory Blumburg (CBB): 21-11, 21-11 (2-0), 27 min.

Mixed Doubles:

[March 17 at 9:24 pm]
+ Sophia Baron and 29 others like this.

Chat:

NOAH

Hey Hailey. [10:46 pm]
Did you see my brother after the game last night? Do you have any idea where he might go on a Friday night in Victoria? [10:46 pm]
HAILEY
I’m sorry, do I look like a mind reader? [10:50 pm]

NOAH
Jeez Hailey, where’s this coming from? [10:51 pm]
Look, did you see Jack or not? [10:52 pm]

HAILEY
I didn’t even know you had a brother. [10:54 pm]

NOAH
So, the answer is “no” then. [10:54 pm]
Fine. [10:54 pm]
Thanks for the help. [10:55 pm]

HAILEY
Why, what happened? [10:59 pm]

NOAH
Nothing… yet. [11:01 pm]
Jack didn’t come home last night. [11:02 pm]

HAILEY
Has he done this before? [11:02 pm]

NOAH
No. My mom’s going ballistic. [11:03 pm]

HAILEY
Noah, I… [11:05 pm]

NOAH
You what, Hailey? [11:07 pm]
Want to insult me some more? [11:08 pm]
‘Cause starting a new school is SO easy. Don’t worry about being friendly to me or anything. [11:09 pm]
HAILEY

OK. Calm down, Noah. [11:10 pm]

I think you’re just upset because of Jack. I understand. [11:10 pm]

NOAH

Oh, you do? [11:12 pm]

You “understand,” Hailey? [11:12 pm]

So you know what it’s like to have your parents split up? [11:12 pm]

And then, after the world’s worst custody battle, have your mom force you to move to a whole new city, no wait, a whole new province on a moment’s notice. And then to top it off, only get to see your dad once a month. [11:12 pm]

You get that? [11:13 pm]

Ya right. [11:13 pm]

And now my brother. [11:15 pm]

What a fan-tastic year. [11:15 pm]

HAILEY

Noah, I… [11:16 pm]

… miss my dad too. [11:16 pm]

NOAH

Your parents are divorced? [11:17 pm]

HAILEY

No. [11:19 pm]

My parents are still together. [11:19 pm]

But he’s not the same. [11:22 pm]

He doesn’t smile anymore. [11:22 pm]

He’s like a shadow. [11:23 pm]

NOAH

Whoa, heavy stuff. [11:27 pm]

Sorry, I’m not sure what to say… [11:28 pm]
HAILEY
Yeah. No, don’t worry about it. :( [11:29 pm]

NOAH
Ugh, sorry. I shouldn’t have said anything in the first place. [11:31 pm]

HAILEY
So, what about Jack? [11:37 pm]

NOAH
He’ll turn up. [11:39 pm]

HAILEY
Do you think you should call the police? [11:39 pm]

NOAH
Hailey… he’ll turn up. [11:39 pm]
I’m sure of it. [11:40 pm]

HAILEY
OK. [11:40 pm]
Btw, I didn’t mean to jump down your throat like that. I just can’t help it sometimes. [11:42 pm]
So… Goodnight then? [11:45 pm]

NOAH
We all say things we don’t mean sometimes… [11:45 pm]
Yeah, nite. [11:46 pm]

PM to Zoe Milner:
[March 17 at 11:59 pm]
I’ve fallen down the rabbit hole.
Mom read us that book once, remember? I must have been four years old, so you would have been about seven, I think. I remember the big fuzzy blanket on the couch, and wearing my footed pajamas. Piglet attached under my arm like another appendage. Nodding off to sleep intermittently, tucked in between you and Mom.

You always liked the Cheshire-Cat, but me, I liked the White Rabbit. He seemed to understand Alice. To save her.

But I could never make sense of Alice’s topsy-turvy nightmare. Because for me, the world seemed simple then: warmth and love.

“The Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts,
   All on a summer day:
The Knave of Hearts, he stole those tarts
   And took them quite away!”¹

Our Queen of Hearts has changed, Zoe. Honestly, you wouldn’t even recognize her. Mom’s become overbearing, overprotective, and overwhelming, and she’s driving me further down the rabbit hole.

I wanted to go for a walk along the seawall with Sophia this evening, but Mom would not allow it. It was the first time in a long while that I actually felt like doing anything. But no, according to her majesty, it was “too dark,” and “not safe.” But I’m fifteen! I tried to convince Mom by promising I would take my cell phone, but she just wouldn’t give in.

I need to break out of this upside-down world. Maybe that boy behind the mask, Noah, will be my White Rabbit?

Log Out
Noah’s Log In:

PM to Jack Huntington:
[March 18 at 12:03 am]

Last night, Mom came up to the attic; she was in a panic. It was really scary, Jack. I didn’t know what to do. I’d never seen Mom like that before. She’d been to your room, and you weren’t there. You weren’t anywhere in the house. She started hyperventilating, and I had to help her crouch down so she could breathe. We called your cell like every five minutes, and left at least a dozen voicemails.

Jack, where are you? Come home.

Log Out
Chapter 5

Hailey’s Log In:

SU:
What the h*ll does J.D. Salinger know.
[March 21 at 10:28 am]
   + 3 people like this.

Com:
Gloria Milner: Watch your language, please, miss. xox, Mom
[March 21 at 12:49 pm]

AS:
Edit Privacy Settings: Gloria Milner has been added to your “Restricted Profile” list.
[March 21 at 12:53 pm]

Chat:

   NOAH
I see you’re friends with your mom on Facebook too? [12:57 pm]
Worst mistake I ever made. [12:57 pm]

   LOL. [12:58 pm]

   HAILEY
Haha. [12:59 pm]
Yeah, I had to. 😊 It was the only way she was going to allow me to keep my account.
[12:59 pm]
“Security” reasons. [1:00 pm]

   NOAH
Well, I think my mom just does it to snoop on my social life. 😊 [1:01 pm]
Funny how my dad doesn’t seem to have the same urge to meddle. :P [1:01 pm]
HAILEY

My dad doesn’t have an account. Also, he doesn’t seem to care about much these days in general, so I doubt he’d be interested in what I write on Facebook.  

[1:02 pm]

NOAH

So, Salinger, huh? Let me guess… grade 10 English?  

[1:03 pm]

HAILEY

You got it. 😎  

[1:03 pm]

NOAH

; )  

[1:03 pm]

So, I take it you’re not a fan of The Catcher in the Rye?  

[1:04 pm]

HAILEY

That is an understatement. 

[1:05 pm]

I HATED IT.  

[1:05 pm]

NOAH

Hailey, just because it’s “reading week,” doesn’t mean you actually have to read. :P  

[1:08 pm]

HAILEY

Ha. Ha.  

[1:08 pm]

I’ve got a lot of catch-up to do.  

[1:09 pm]

NOAH

Really?  

[1:12 pm]

‘Cause I pegged you as a total goodie-goodie.  

[1:12 pm]

HAILEY

Huh, you’ve met me, right?  

[1:13 pm]

Well, I used to be.  

[1:17 pm]

A goodie-goodie.  

[1:18 pm]

Before.  

[1:20 pm]
I mean you seem pretty smart to me. [1:20 pm]

Uh, thanks? [1:20 pm]

Before? [1:21 pm]
Before what? [1:21 pm]

Hey, I forgot to ask about Jack. Is he okay? [1:29 pm]

Long story short: yeah. [1:30 pm]

Oh, good. [1:30 pm]
What happened? [1:30 pm]
I mean, only if you want to talk about it… [1:31 pm]

Jack’s an idiot. [1:32 pm]
Don’t get me wrong. He’s a genius and all that. [1:32 pm]
But he’s also a moron. [1:33 pm]

Says you. [1:34 pm]

No, he deserves it. Believe me. [1:36 pm]
So, last Friday when he was supposed to be watching ME at the badminton game, he took a double-decker bus out to the Victoria airport in Sidney. [1:39 pm]
NOAH

Just wait, it gets better. [1:40 pm]

Or worse. [1:41 pm]

Depending how ya see it. [1:41 pm]

HAILEY

Go on. [1:42 pm]

NOAH

OK. So, evidently, Jack came up with some big story for our dad that he was on the debate team at school, and that he needed funds to go to a student conference. [1:44 pm]

HAILEY

We don’t have a debate team. [1:44 pm]

NOAH

Bingo. [1:45 pm]

Anyway, so our dad ended up paying for Jack’s flight to Calgary. [1:45 pm]

HAILEY

Whoa, Jack must be really in for it. [1:47 pm]

NOAH

Majorly. [1:47 pm]

After my mom found out where he was (and that he was OK), she went on a cleaning rampage. [1:48 pm]

She stormed around the house and collected dirty dishes, she slammed them into the sink, and then she scrubbed furiously at the caked on food bits. I could hear her muttering under her breath the whole time. [1:49 pm]

HAILEY

So, is Jack back now? [1:50 pm]

NOAH

Nah, Jack’s still in Calgary. [1:51 pm]

Says he’s not coming back ‘till the end of reading week. [1:53 pm]
HAILEY

Oh, jeez. [1:54 pm]

NOAH

Yeah, this week has been a real hoot. [1:55 pm]

Every night my mom’s been yelling at my dad on the phone. She thinks this is all his fault. She thinks everything is all his fault. [1:56 pm]

But I know Jack. [1:58 pm]

And this is ALL him. [1:58 pm]

My dad tells me that I need to cut her some slack… but it’s kinda hard, ya know? She’s always on my back about something. [2:00 pm]

HAILEY

Well, at least Jack’s OK. [2:03 pm]

NOAH

Yeah, I guess. [2:03 pm]

So, why you hating on Salinger, huh? [2:05 pm]

Got the homework blues? [2:05 pm]

HAILEY

I can’t believe they’re making me read this… [2:06 pm]

NOAH

I read it last year in grade 10 English, too. ;) [2:07 pm]

HAILEY

If he had had someone to talk to, do you think he would’ve acted that way after his brother died? [2:09 pm]

NOAH

Oh, you mean Holden shouldn’t drop out of school, drink, smoke, and throw away his life? [2:10 pm]

Yeah, you’re right, Holden should just get over it. [2:11 pm]
HAILEY
That is NOT what I meant.  [2:11 pm]

NOAH
Huh?  [2:12 pm]

HAILEY
Never mind.  [2:12 pm]
I’ve got homework to finish.  [2:12 pm]

NOAH
But I was just agreeing with you about Salinger…  [2:13 pm]

Logout

Noah’s Log In:

W:

Noah Huntington created an Event: “SMALL get-together” on Saturday March 24. (8 invites)
[March 24 at 11:35 am]

Noah Huntington is attending “SMALL get-together.”
[March 24 at 11:36 am]

Chat:

NOAH
I hope you’re prepared.  [11:41 am]

JACK
For what?  [11:42 am]
NOAH
Mom’s on her way to Calgary. [11:42 am]

JACK
WHAT?? [11:42 am]

NOAH
Yeah, Mom left this morning for the airport. [11:43 am]
She’s been going on and on about having to pay for this extra flight to Calgary, but she
said she’s fed up with how Dad is dealing with this, and she’s bringing you home. [11:44 am]

JACK
But I am home. [11:45 am]
Calgary is home, Noah. [11:45 am]
You know that. [11:46 am]

NOAH
Well, all I can say is good luck, Jack. [11:47 am]
You’ll need it. [11:48 am]
Mom’s like a heat-seeking torpedo locked onto her target. [11:51 am]
I’ve been taking the brunt of her target practice this whole week, and I didn’t even do
anything.
Take cover, bro. [11:52 am]

W:
Noah Huntington is now friends with Layla Thompson and Sam Jones. [March 24 at 12:34 pm]
Chat:

NOAH

Hope you’re not still upset with me. [12:37 pm]

My mom left town today to get Jack from Calgary, so I was thinking about having some people over tonight. [12:42 pm]

Nothin’ special. [12:43 pm]

Anyway, if you feel like coming over, give me a shout. [12:50 pm]

HAILEY

Yeah, I’d like to… [12:50 pm]

But I’ll have to check with my mom. [12:51 pm]

NOAH

I knew you’d come around. [12:51 pm]

;) [12:51 pm]

E:


Saturday March 24, 9 pm

My mom’s away for a few days, SO… party time?!

Going (3), Maybe (), Invited (5)

Layla Thompson is going.
[March 24 at 12:55 pm]

Kyle Ritchie is going.
[March 24 at 12:59 pm]
Noah Huntington: Booze is strictly prohibited… Bhahaha! Jk! But for real people: BYOWB (bring your own “water” bottle).

[March 24 at 1:28 pm]

Sam Jones declined.

[March 24 at 1:55 pm]

Hailey Milner is going.

[March 24 at 2:17 pm]

Chat:

Hey, Layla!  

So, party’s shaping up.

[4:05 pm]

So I’m a bit shy… Doesn’t mean I didn’t notice you.

[4:14 pm]

I didn’t even think you knew who I was!  

You haven’t said more than two words to me at practice.

[4:12 pm]

So I’m a bit shy… Doesn’t mean I didn’t notice you.

[4:14 pm]

I’m glad you’re coming to the party.

[4:11 pm]

You haven’t said more than two words to me at practice.

[4:12 pm]

So, who else is coming tonight?

[4:15 pm]

Basically everyone from badminton.

[4:16 pm]

Kyle, Trevor, Emily, you, and Hailey, and… I forget. Most of the team anyway.

[4:16 pm]
LAYLA

Hailey’s going? [4:17 pm]
Really? [4:18 pm]

NOAH

Yeah. [4:18 pm]
Why? [4:19 pm]

LAYLA

I’m just surprised, that’s all. [4:21 pm]
She hasn’t really been going to things this year. [4:21 pm]

NOAH

Why not? [4:22 pm]

LAYLA

Uhhh. [4:25 pm]
It’s been a hard year. [4:25 pm]

NOAH

What do ya mean? [4:26 pm]

LAYLA

I probably shouldn’t have said anything in first place. [4:26 pm]
We’re really not that close. [4:27 pm]
Don’t tell Hailey I said anything, OK? [4:27 pm]

NOAH

Tell her what?? [4:29 pm]

LAYLA

Exactly. [4:29 pm]

NOAH

No, really. What am I not supposed to mention? [4:31 pm]

LAYLA

So, at this party of yours… maybe we can finally talk?? [4:33 pm]
I got a glimpse into Noah’s world tonight.

While everyone at the party was looking at people, I was looking at relics. I want to get to the heart of Noah.

Picture frames on the fireplace – Noah and Jack are twins. Two halves of a whole. Photo after photo, pictures of the twins: first day of kindergarten, soccer championships, Halloween. And then, a few, rare family photos. Maimed. His dad’s head jaggedly removed. An unfortunate daily reminder for Noah: his family is broken.

Our mom would never do that. She likes to keep things the way they were. She still makes my lunch every morning before school, and kisses me on the forehead before I go out the door. But, this wholesome illusion stings just as much.

I haven’t been in your room since we were in there last spring. Mom’s left your things untouched: your desk by the window still littered with papers; your ladybug lamp smiling obnoxiously at no one; the bold font on the calendar still screaming “JUNE 2011.”
I didn’t go in to snoop. I was raiding your alcohol. Mom hasn’t found your stash in the closet. Or she’s pretending it’s not there.

I don’t drink, you know that, Zoe. But I did tonight.

I opened your door to leave, not even trying to hide the bottle of cider in my hand, and there was Dad. Looking more disappointed than ever. But I don’t think it was the alcohol. Even after all this time, it seemed like he still expected to see you. He reached past me for the door, edging me out of your room. He didn’t say anything. But I knew what it meant.

I am not allowed in. No one is allowed in.

You’re off limits. Like Noah’s dad.

I see my own scars reflecting back at me from behind the boy’s mask. Our wounds, no longer solitary, no longer repugnant. Safety and comfort in Noah. Now, together solace and refuge. I am not alone.

Log Out

Hailey’s Log In:

N:

You were tagged in 4 photos in Kyle Ritchie’s photo album: “Badminton Play-AHs Party” (68 photos).

[March 25 at 12:13 pm]
SU:

Hailey Milner: Still in my pajamas, drinking LOTS of water, and watching 80’s movies on TV. Getting a lot done today, obviously. ☺

[March 25 at 12:20 pm]

+ Kyle Ritchie, Isabella Smith and 3 others like this.

Chat:

SOPHIA
You went to a party last night? [12:36 pm]

HAILEY
Yeah. [12:37 pm]

SOPHIA
Whose? [12:39 pm]

HAILEY
Noah Huntington. [12:43 pm]

SOPHIA
That new kid? [12:44 pm]

HAILEY
I think I might like him, Soph. [12:49 pm]

He’s different, like me. [12:50 pm]

SOPHIA
Have you told him about last year? [12:52 pm]

HAILEY
You’re a broken record, Sophia. [12:54 pm]
SOPHIA
Hailey, that’s not fair.  [12:55 pm]
I’m just trying to look out for you.  [12:55 pm]

HAILEY
Doo-op, do, do, do, do, doo-op. Yay-ya.  [12:56 pm]

SOPHIA
Did you have fun at least? At the party?  [12:59 pm]

HAILEY
You jealous?  [1:02 pm]

SOPHIA
No, just interested to hear how it went.  [1:03 pm]

HAILEY
Fine.  [1:04 pm]
Mostly it was just people standing around listening to music.  [1:04 pm]

SOPHIA
So a typical lame high school party?  [1:05 pm]

HAILEY
I’m pretty sure I had a fun time.  [1:06 pm]

SOPHIA
Pretty sure?  [1:06 pm]
Were you drinking, Hailey?  [1:07 pm]

HAILEY
Last night I did.  [1:09 pm]

SOPHIA
But you don’t drink!  [1:09 pm]

HAILEY
I found a bottle of cider in Zoe’s room.  [1:11 pm]
I went to the party hoping to hang out with Noah. But I didn’t even see him really.  
[1:13 pm]
He answered the door to let me in, and then after that, I couldn’t find him.  
[1:14 pm]

SOPHIA
Probably for the best.  [1:15 pm]

HAILEY
You don’t know him.  [1:15 pm]
He gets me.  [1:15 pm]

SOPHIA
Listen Hails, you’ve barely just met the guy.  [1:16 pm]

HAILEY
I don’t need your advice, Sophia.  [1:16 pm]

SOPHIA
I’m your best friend. If you’ve forgotten.  [1:17 pm]

HAILEY
What do you want me to say, Soph?  [1:17 pm]

SOPHIA
You’ve got your mom and dad, Hailey. You should talk to them.  [1:18 pm]

HAILEY
You don’t get it.  [1:18 pm]
Your life’s too perfect; you can’t see that mine’s all messed up.  [1:18 pm]

SOPHIA
Bad things happen, Hailey.  [1:19 pm]

HAILEY
Just stop.  [1:19 pm]
I can’t talk to them.  [1:20 pm]
Noah would understand. You don’t.  [1:20 pm]

Log Out
Chapter 6

Noah’s Log In:

W:

Layla Thompson: A few of us are going to Mt. Washington for the last few days of spring break. You should come! ;)
[March 29 at 3:11 pm]

  + Noah Huntington likes this.

Com:

Noah Huntington: Wish I could. But my mom has me and my brother on lockdown. In addition to Jack’s AWOL, she found out about my party last weekend.
[March 29 at 5:16 pm]

Layla Thompson: Bummer! Guess I’ll see ya at school next week!
[March 29 at 8:28 pm]

Noah Huntington: Yeah, only if the jaded warden will let us out.
[March 29 at 8:43 pm]

Joyce Potter: Yikes, Noah. Go easy on your mom, eh? Life isn’t so simple for her either.
[March 29 at 8:51 pm] (2 likes)

Chat:

HAILEY

Hi Noah!  [9:21 pm]

NOAH

Hey Hailey.  [9:23 pm]

HAILEY

So your mom wasn’t too happy about the party?  [9:23 pm]
NOAH

Nope. [9:25 pm]

She blew a fuse and took our cell phones as punishment. Won’t get it back until I go to my dad’s next week. [9:25 pm]

Also, Jack and I are grounded for, like, forever. [9:26 pm]

HAILEY

So Jack’s back from Calgary? [9:27 pm]

NOAH

Yeah. [9:29 pm]

HAILEY

Is he still having a tough time? [9:30 pm]

NOAH

What do you mean? [9:31 pm]

HAILEY

You know… Moving, the divorce… [9:31 pm]

NOAH

Hailey, do we have to talk about this now? [9:33 pm]

HAILEY

I’m sure you’re both having a hard time. As bad as things are at my house, I would still want my parents to be together, too. I’m sorry you’re going through this Noah. I’m here to listen whenever you need. [9:33 pm]

Oh. [9:35 pm]

Sorry. I didn’t see your last message there. [9:36 pm]

NOAH

Sometimes I just don’t want to be reminded, OK? [9:37 pm]

HAILEY

I get that. More than you know. [9:38 pm]
NOAH

Sure.  [9:39 pm]

HAILEY

Your party was fun.  [9:43 pm]

NOAH

Yeah?  [9:45 pm]

Glad you had a good time.  [9:46 pm]

HAILEY

I didn’t really see you there though.  [9:48 pm]

NOAH

I was pretty busy.  [9:53 pm]

Hailey, I’ve gotta bunch of homework to finish here. So…  [9:54 pm]

HAILEY

OK.  [9:55 pm]

See ya at practice.  [9:55 pm]

Log Out

Noah’s Log In:

GP:

Emily Hannok: Great practice this afternoon, Tigers! Don’t forget about our big match against Beacon Hill Hawkes on Friday!

[April 3 at 6:15 pm]
Chat:

NOAH

Hey Layla!  [6:25 pm]
I thought we were going to walk home together after practice? :P  [6:25 pm]

LAYLA

I bailed. I thought I texted you.  [6:26 pm]

NOAH

I don’t have my phone this week. My mom’s got it. 😊  [6:26 pm]
What’s up?  [6:26 pm]

LAYLA

Hailey.  [6:27 pm]

NOAH

Huh?  [6:27 pm]

LAYLA

I ran into Hailey’s friend, Sophia, at lunch today.  [6:30 pm]
We were talking about you…  [6:31 pm]

NOAH

You were?!  [6:32 pm]

LAYLA

She mentioned something about you and Hailey…  [6:34 pm]

NOAH

Like what?  [6:35 pm]

LAYLA

Like a “connection” or something.  [6:35 pm]

NOAH

A connection??  [6:36 pm]

LAYLA

That’s what she said.  [6:36 pm]
So… is it true?  [6:39 pm]
NOAH
I mean, yeah, we’ve chatted a little bit. [6:41 pm]
She’s my doubles partner after all – she’s cool! :P [6:41 pm]

LAYLA
I’m not being funny here. [6:42 pm]
It’s tricky with Hailey… [6:45 pm]

NOAH
I mean I like Hailey. [6:46 pm]
But as a friend. [6:46 pm]
Period. [6:47 pm]
You, on the other hand… [6:49 pm]
😊 [6:49 pm]

LAYLA
Noah, I don’t know if this is a good idea. [6:52 pm]

NOAH
Look, we don’t have to rub her nose in it, but… [6:53 pm]

LAYLA
Sophia said Hailey’s fragile right now. [6:54 pm]

NOAH
That doesn’t sound like the Hailey I know. [6:57 pm]

LAYLA
Then maybe you should take a closer look. [6:58 pm]

Log Out
Hailey’s Log In:

GP:

Emily Hannok: Posted for Coach Sanders.

The Mount Tolmie Tigers Badminton Team (2012) – Recent results
Mt. Tolmie Tigers (MTT) vs Beacon Hill Hawkes (GHH) (Matches: 4 –1, Games: 8 - 3)

Women’s Singles:
Layla Thompson (MTT) bt. Vicky Trunsell (BHH): 21-16, 21-10 (2-0), 44 min.

Men’s Singles:
Kyle Ritchie (MTT) bt. Lucas Baker (BHH): 21-16, 21-7 (2-0), 36 min.

Women’s Doubles:
Emily Hannok and Isabella Smith (MTT) bt. Amelia Hall and Chantell Bishop (BHH): 21-18, 18-21, 24-22 (2-1), 70 min.

Men’s Doubles:
Sam Jones and Trevor Jacobs (MTT) bt. Caleb Salisbury and Jason Lee (BHH): 21-16, 21-17 (2-0), 49 min.

Mixed Doubles:
Rebecca Hinton and Isaac LePage (BHH) bt. Hailey Milner and Noah Huntington (MTT): 21-9, 21-5 (2-0), 24 min.

[April 6 at 11:02 pm]
+ 13 people like this.

Com:
Emily Hannok: Good job team! Don’t worry Hailey and Noah, you’ll do better next time!
[April 6 at 11:05 pm]
Chat:

HAILEY

Sorry about the match today. I felt like I was getting in the way.  [11:09 pm]

NOAH

Nah, it’s okay. Can’t win them every time.  :P  [11:11 pm]

HAILEY

😊  [11:13 pm]

How’ve you been lately? I haven’t seen you around as much.  [11:15 pm]

NOAH

Things are good. Jack’s rebel-without-a-cause act seems to have died down, so there’s not as much arguing going on at home. That makes being at my mom’s a bit easier lately.  [11:17 pm]

And I’ve been spending a lot of time with some people from the team…  [11:17 pm]

HAILEY

That’s good.  [11:18 pm]

Hey Noah, do you maybe want to hang out sometime this weekend?  [11:22 pm]

We could walk over to the mall for ice cream or something.  [11:23 pm]

NOAH

I’m in Calgary at my dad’s this weekend.  [11:25 pm]

Hailey… are things okay with you?  [11:28 pm]

I’m fine.  [11:29 pm]

Why?  [11:30 pm]

NOAH

It’s just I’ve heard some stuff lately…  [11:31 pm]
HAILEY
What stuff?  [11:31 pm]

NOAH
Nothing specific.  [11:32 pm]
A lot of it doesn’t make much sense to me.  [11:33 pm]

HAILEY
I’ve been wanting to explain some things to you...  [11:39 pm]

NOAH
Look Hailey, why don’t we plan to hang out next weekend?  [11:40 pm]
Whatever you need to say, ice cream will definitely make it easier.  [11:42 pm]
😊  [11:43 pm]
I’ll text you when I’m back from my dad’s.  [11:45 pm]

HAILEY
Ok.  [11:45 pm]

NOAH
K, talk later. I’ll message you.  [11:47 pm]

Log Out

Hailey’s Log In:

PM to Zoe Milner:
[April 7 at 10:57 pm]

Noah really is a good guy. I can see that. And he genuinely seems to care about me. I don’t know what it is about him that makes me feel so comfortable. I mean I barely just met him. But somehow, I feel more at ease talking to him than to anyone else… even
Sophia. Maybe that’s because he doesn’t know about what happened last year. About you. Part of me wants to keep things just the way they are now. But then, part of me really needs to tell him. Like, somehow he’ll understand. Or that he’ll make it all better. Am I crazy?

I want to tell him everything. I want him to know about you, and about how I feel.

I wish you were here to tell me what to do.

Chat:

SOPHIA
Hey you, why you up so late? [11:46 pm]

HAILEY
Just looking at old pics on Facebook. [11:47 pm]

SOPHIA
Yeah? [11:47 pm]

So how are things going at badminton? [11:48 pm]

HAILEY
Fine. [11:49 pm]

SOPHIA
Really? [11:49 pm]

HAILEY
I said FINE. [11:49 pm]

SOPHIA
Whoa, Hailey. Down kitty. [11:49 pm]

I just wanted to check. [11:50 pm]
I’ve heard a few things about Noah lately.  [11:51 pm]
Not bad things per se… just things.  [11:51 pm]

HAILEY

Whatever.  [11:52 pm]

SOPHIA

I’m trying to look out for you.  [11:52 pm]

HAILEY

I’m fine.  [11:55 pm]

SOPHIA

I just don’t want you to get your hopes up, that’s all.  [11:56 pm]

HAILEY

Stay out of it.  [11:57 pm]

I know him.  [11:59 pm]

SU:

Hailey Milner: Visions of ice cream cones dance through my head.
+ 5 people like this.

Log Out
Chapter 7

Hailey’s Log In:

SU:

Hailey Milner: Quitting badminton. Effective immediately.
[April 14 at 5:13 pm]

Com:
Emily Hannok: But Hailey, you were just getting good!
[April 14 at 6:04 pm]
Kyle Ritchie: It was one bad match, Hailey. Get a grip.
[April 14 at 6:23 pm]
Isabella Smith: Wow, Kyle. You’re so sensitive… NOT.
[April 14 at 6:31 pm] (2 likes)
Layla Thompson: Hailey, please don’t leave the team. We need you! 😊
[April 14 at 6:54 pm]
Kyle Ritchie: I’m just saying, Isabella, that we’ve got provincials soon. And she’s leaving us high and dry.
[April 14 at 7:09 pm]
Noah Huntington: Dude, give it a rest, OK? It’s up to Hailey. But I’ll sure miss my doubles partner!
[April 14 at 7:19 pm] (4 likes)
Sophia Baron: What?! Why? What happened?
[April 14 at 7:33 pm]
Hailey Milner: All I ever did was show up. I didn’t even play very much. I’m sure the team can find a replacement, Kyle.
[April 14 at 7:54 pm]

PM to Zoe Milner:
[April 14 at 9:17 pm]

Life really sucks sometimes. Just when I thought I was figuring it out, the world insists on bringing me to my knees. Why does everything happen to me?
Today was supposed to be this magical day. I was going on my ice cream “date” with Noah. Or so I thought. All week I practiced scenes in my head of how it was going to go. As we walked to the mall, Noah would tentatively reach for my hand. I would blush, and giggle, but then I would place my hand in his and he would smile at me, that warm Noah-smile. I’ve seen it on occasion at badminton. I pictured us eating our ice cream outside at the nearby kids’ park. The two of us just sitting on the swings, dangling our feet in the park sand. In my mind, this was when I was going to tell him. I was going to tell Noah that the only thing I look forward to is spending the half an hour on court with him at practice. How I spend my whole day counting down the minutes to Noah. I can’t explain why it happens with him, maybe because he doesn’t look at me with pity like everyone else. Like Sophia does. But he makes me forget about Mom’s crying at night or about how late Dad gets home and how he never walks past my room anymore saying “Goodnight sweetpea.” I forget to be sad about you.

And it’s nice. I’m sorry, Zoe. But it’s a relief for just one second to be me again. The me I was before.

And he was going to put his arm around me and tell me that as long as he’s around, everything’s going to be okay. And I’d believe him. Because it has to be true. It has to be. Then, for the first time in my 15-year-old life, a boy would lean over and kiss me on the lips. My heart would be safe.

But, that isn’t how it happened, Zoe. And now, I’m scared that I’ve lost my Noah.

We never even made it to the mall. Noah had texted me earlier this morning saying that he had some chores to finish before we could hang out. So we agreed to meet at his house
and walk from there. When I got there this afternoon, his house looked different in the
daytime than it had that night of the party last month. It seemed smaller. Emptier. I could
tell I had come in at a bad time. Noah was looking grumpy and his mom had her hands on
her hips. Like they had just been arguing. Politely, I agreed to wait upstairs in his room.

As I sat alone in Noah’s room, his mom’s stressed out voice rounded the staircase. Terse,
hard comments were flung back and forth between them. Noah’s sullen tone surprised
me. I didn’t know he had it in him. I noticed Noah’s laptop and decided that checking my
Facebook account would be a good way to distract myself. But when I opened the
browser, Noah was already logged in.

I knew right away that my swing set kiss would not be happening today. That it might
never.

Layla’s name came up over and over again on the screen. Dozens of private messages
with Layla. He told her all about his parents’ divorce… I thought he’d only shared that
with me. That I was special to him. Like he was for me.

I guess I was wrong.

Chat:

SOPHIA

Your status says you’re quitting badminton? Since when? [9:22 pm]

HAILEY

Well, are you happy, Soph? I won’t be seeing much of Noah anymore. [9:22 pm]
SOPHIA
One thing’s for sure, I’m not exactly happy about how you treat me these days. [9:23 pm]

Any chance that this is about Layla…? [9:25 pm]

HAILEY
You knew? [9:26 pm]

SOPHIA
Don’t get all dramatic on me. [9:28 pm]

I wondered if that might be why Layla was asking about you the other day, but I didn’t know for sure. [9:28 pm]

I didn’t want to upset you if it wasn’t for real. [9:29 pm]

HAILEY
Why her? [9:33 pm]

What’s wrong with me? [9:33 pm]

SOPHIA
 النفس一群. [9:34 pm]

So how did he break it to you? Was he at least nice about it? [9:35 pm]

HAILEY
He didn’t tell me. [9:35 pm]

SOPHIA
So how did you find out? [9:35 pm]

HAILEY
I don’t want to talk about it. [9:37 pm]

SOPHIA
Hailey, come on. [9:37 pm]

I’m on your side. [9:39 pm]

HAILEY
Fine. [9:40 pm]

I saw it on his laptop. I was over at his house, and it was sitting on his desk. [9:40 pm]
SOPHIA

Hailey, you didn’t… [9:41 pm]

HAILEY

It wasn’t my fault. Soph, I didn’t mean to. [9:41 pm]
I just wanted to check my own account, but when I opened the browser, he was already logged in. [9:41 pm]

I couldn’t stop myself. [9:41 pm]

All of a sudden, all I could think about was reading the screen as quickly as possible. [9:41 pm]

SOPHIA

Hailey, that is called spying. I don’t believe you! You invaded his privacy! I know you’re hurting, but it doesn’t give you license to do anything you want. I’m your friend, but you’ve become someone else lately. You’ve been plain old mean to me (sorry, but true), and cold towards everyone at school. The way I see it, if you keep this up, you’re going to lose more than just Noah. [9:44 pm]

HAILEY

I don’t have to listen to this. [9:45 pm]

But I just don’t get how could he like Layla better than me? [9:51 pm]
How could she possibly know what he’s going through with his family? The worst thing that’s happened to her is a bad haircut. [9:51 pm]

I was going to tell him, Soph. [9:52 pm]

SOPHIA

I know this is important to you. But you don’t need to take this out on Layla. We’ve both known her since kindergarten, and she hasn’t got a mean bone in her body. [9:53 pm]

As for you telling him… honestly Hails, I’m surprised that Noah hasn’t already found out on his own. [9:53 pm]

I mean people don’t talk about it a lot. But it’s not a secret. [9:54 pm]
HAILEY

Just stop it, Sophia. [9:54 pm]

My life is not up for gossip. [9:54 pm]

SOPHIA

No one gossips, Hails. [9:55 pm]

Please, open your eyes! You have friends around you. [9:55 pm]

I’m here. [9:56 pm]

HAILEY

I want Noah. [9:59 pm]

SOPHIA

Did he catch you snooping? Does he know you saw his account? [10:04 pm]

HAILEY

No, I don’t think he saw me. I didn’t stay. [10:05 pm]

SOPHIA

Are you and Noah still going to be friends? [10:05 pm]

HAILEY

He’ll get tired of Layla soon enough. [10:06 pm]

Noah and I are meant to be together, Sophia. I can feel it. There has to have been a reason for last year, and maybe that was to bring Noah into my life. [10:06 pm]

SOPHIA

Hailey… I’m not so sure about that. [10:08 pm]

Not everything happens for a reason. Especially that. [10:08 pm]

HAILEY

Zoe wouldn’t leave me all alone, Sophia. [10:09 pm]

When Noah gets over Layla, I’ll be there for him. He needs me just as much as I need him. [10:09 pm]

Noah is my soulmate. [10:11 pm]
SOPHIA

Hailey… [10:11 pm]

HAILEY

Please, Sophia, just let me have this. I need *something*. [10:12 pm]

PM to Zoe Milner:
[April 14 at 11:11 pm]

You said you’d always protect me. Well, I’m down and I’m out, and where are you now? What good was that promise if you couldn’t keep it? You lied to me. You left.

Why aren’t you here? Why aren’t you here? Why aren’t you here?

I *need* you here.

I need my big sister. Not Sophia, not Mom, not Dad: I need you. And you’re not here. You’re never here. Please, Zoe! I can’t do it. I can’t.

I need *you*.

I don’t know what to do. You left me with only pieces of broken parents. You took them away from me. You stole them. Mom’s hovering over me, but she does a fine job of avoiding anything like actually talking to me. I’ve tried, but she always changes the subject to how my homework’s going, or how the scoring works in badminton. Topics that I don’t really care about. And Dad’s checked out. Unavailable. *Adiós amigo.*

I can’t take even one more thing going wrong for me this year. I’m flunking math, skipping classes, and dropping out of badminton. Sophia probably hates me by now. I’m
constantly fighting with her. And it’s all me. I don’t mean to do it. It just comes out all wrong. Every word she says puts me on edge. Every single nice or understanding comment rubs me the wrong way.

Nothing will be the same without you.

And now, Noah’s leaving me, too. He was the one person I could still be the old Hailey with. I could laugh without feeling guilty for being happy. He didn’t rush in to take care of me; for once I was not the poor little Hailey that everyone avoided. When I was with him, for a short time I allowed myself to forget to remember you. He gave me that gift. That small break.

I’m not going to lose Noah.

I can’t.

Log Out
Chapter 8

Noah’s Log In:

N:

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.  
[April 14 at 11:23 pm]

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.  
[April 14 at 11:34 pm]

Hailey Milner commented on a photo of you.  
[April 14 at 11:35 pm]

Chat:

NOAH
Hi Layla, maybe you’ve already heard by now through the girl-grapevine or whatever, but I’m pretty sure that Hailey knows about you and me now.  [11:41 pm]

LAYLA
I haven’t heard! I’ve been stuck phoneless finishing homework all day.  [11:43 pm]
How’d that happen? How did she take it?  [11:43 pm]

NOAH
It’s just a hunch really. Although I’m like 95% sure that she knows. Hailey and I were supposed to hang out today (oops, hope you’re okay with that Layla) and she just disappeared. Without even saying goodbye.  [11:44 pm]

I noticed my laptop open on my desk... I don’t know. Maybe I’m wrong.  [11:44 pm]

LAYLA
Nope. You’re right.  [11:48 pm]

I just got a text from Isabella who said she spoke with Sophia about it on the phone tonight.  [11:48 pm]
NOAH

So, what’s the verdict?  [11:49 pm]

Does she hate me?    [11:49 pm]

LAYLA

😊  [11:49 pm]

Hold on.      [11:49 pm]

Ok, so Isabella says that it didn’t seem like Hailey was that mad about it. But also that
Sophia wouldn’t say too much.       [11:51 pm]

Figures. Once a best friend, always a best friend.    [11:51 pm]

NOAH

Girls!  [11:52 pm]

Can’t live with them…    [11:52 pm]

LAYLA

I think you had better finish that sentence.   :)   [11:54 pm]

NOAH

…but you can’t live without them.       [11:55 pm]

😊  [11:55 pm]

LAYLA

Haha. Well, that’s a load off! Now I don’t have to feel so terrible every time I see Hailey.       [11:58 pm]

So, now that it’s out in the open… are we like “Facebook official?”     [11:59 pm]

NOAH

Uhhhh.       [12:03 am]

I mean I think I’d like to be “Facebook official” with you eventually, but maybe we
should just wait a bit to change our statuses?     [12:04 am]

Might be a good idea to give Hailey some time to get used to the idea before broadcasting
it to the entire school.     [12:05 am]

OK?       [12:07 am]
LAYLA

Yeah, I guess that makes sense. [12:10 am]

But I don’t want to wait forever. 😊 [12:10 am]

NOAH

We won’t. [12:11 am]

I promise. Everything will work out. [12:11 am]

You’ll see. ;) [12:12 am]

Log Out

Noah’s Log In:

N:

Layla Thompson wrote on your wall. [April 17 at 12:15 am]

Hailey Milner likes your comment. [April 17 at 12:37 am]

Hailey Milner wrote on your wall. [April 17 at 12:49 am]

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you. [April 17 at 1:05 am]

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you. [April 17 at 1:11 am]

Hailey Milner commented on a photo of you. [April 17 at 1:26 am]
Emily Hannok: Let’s give a big warm welcome to our new mixed doubles teammate, Sasha Foreman. See ya’ll at practice after school! Go Tigers! 😊

[April 17 at 9:05 am] + 11 people like this.

Chat:

JACK
So, it seems like you have a very…uhhh… “supportive” friend lately…

NOAH
What? You mean Hailey??
Oh, and you’re so together, Jack? Do you recall that you just ran away from home? Or are you just noticing, maybe, that I have friends?

JACK
Whoa, whoa! Easy boy. Why are you taking your aggression out on me? You’re all sugar and spice with your girlfriends.

Yes, I said plural.

NOAH
How would you know anything about what’s going on?

JACK
You think that just because you’re the jock, you’re the only one who can make friends at this school. Well, you’re wrong, bucko.

While you’ve been swamped in girl-drama, I joined the chess club and met some cool people.

Lots of these kids have been going to school together for a long time. Like grade school long. And some of them have told me some interesting things about your friend Hailey. Want me to share…?
NOAH

You know what, Jack? Just let me enjoy being popular for once. You don’t always have to win. [7:15 pm]

I don’t care about your “information.” It’s probably all lies anyway. [7:15 pm]
From now on: stay out of my life. [7:16 pm]

Log Out

Noah’s Log In:

SU:

Noah Huntington: Friday night dishes duty again. 😊 When I get my own place I’m gonna use only paper plates!
[April 20 at 7:22 pm]

+ 7 people like this.

GP:

Layla Thompson: The Tigers destroyed the Ross Bay Beavers on court tonight! Rrroar! 😊 And a decent showing from our new player, Sasha. Way to go team! 😊 Full results from today’s matches to be posted soon!
[April 20 at 7:34 pm]

+ 34 people like this.
Chat:

NOAH

Hey Hailey.  [7:43 pm]
Could have used you on the court tonight.  [7:45 pm]
You’re 10x better a player than your replacement, Sasha.  [7:46 pm]
And we both know that’s saying something! ;)  [7:46 pm]
You never did get a chance to tell me what you wanted to say the other day…  [7:50 pm]
OK, well. Talk later, I guess?  [7:55 pm]
The team misses you, Hails.  [7:57 pm]

HAILEY

Well, I don’t miss them!  [7:59 pm]
I miss you.  [8:00 pm]

NOAH

Uhhh, OK.  [8:06 pm]
Sorry, I don’t…I don’t know what to say…  [8:07 pm]
Maybe we should meet up at lunch sometime so we can talk? You know, finally get this whole thing sorted out.  [8:08 pm]

…Hailey?  [8:13 pm]

NF:

Hailey Milner left the group Mount Tolmie Tigers Badminton Team (2012).
[April 20 at 8:14 pm]

Log Out
Noah’s Log In:

N:

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.
[April 20 at 9:05 pm]

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.
[April 20 at 10:13 pm]

Hailey Milner commented on a photo of you.
[April 20 at 10:42 pm]

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.
[April 20 at 10:51 pm]

Hailey Milner likes your comment.
[April 20 at 11:17 pm]

Hailey Milner likes your comment.
[April 20 at 11:22 pm]

Hailey Milner likes your comment.
[April 20 at 11:29 pm]

Hailey Milner likes your comment.
[April 21 at 12:31 am]

Hailey Milner likes your comment.
[April 21 at 1:16 am]

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.
[April 21 at 1:33 am]

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.
[April 21 at 1:41 am]

Hailey Milner commented on a photo of you.
[April 21 at 1:54 am]

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.
[April 21 at 1:58 am]

Hailey Milner likes your comment.
[April 21 at 2:06 am]

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.
[April 21 at 2:08 am]
Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.  
[April 21 at 2:12 am]

Hailey Milner commented on a photo of you.  
[April 21 at 2:15 am]

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.  
[April 21 at 3:07 am]

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.  
[April 21 at 3:10 am]

Hailey Milner commented on a photo of you.  
[April 21 at 3:34 am]

Hailey Milner commented on a photo of you.  
[April 21 at 3:39 am]

Hailey Milner commented on a photo of you.  
[April 21 at 3:54 am]

Hailey Milner commented on a photo of you.  
[April 21 at 3:55 am]

Hailey Milner commented on a photo of you.  
[April 21 at 4:03 am]

Hailey Milner likes your comment.  
[April 21 at 4:37 am]

Chat:

NOAH

Whoa.  [9:15 am]

Jack, you have to come upstairs immediately.  [9:15 am]

JACK

Why?  [9:16 am]

NOAH

I just opened my Facebook and there are like a zillion notifications from Hailey.  
[9:16 am]

Should I tell Mom?  [9:17 am]
JACK

I thought you weren’t talking to me anymore.  [9:18 am]

NOAH

Jack, you’ve gotta see this. Just come.  [9:18 am]

JACK

I suppose this might be classified as an extenuating circumstance. [9:19 am]

Fine. Be right there. [9:19 am]

Log Out

Hailey’s Log In:

AS:

Edit password: NoahNoahNoah
[April 28 at 11:26 am]

Log Out

Noah’s Log In:

Chat:

NOAH

Hailey, are you online?  [11:48 am]

I’ve been trying to track you down all week at school. I think we need to talk.  [11:48 am]
N:

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you.  [April 28 at 11:51 am]

Chat:

    NOAH

Hailey, stop it! You’re freakin’ me out.  [11:52 am]
What’s up with you?  [11:52 am]
Hailey! Answer me! I know you’re online.  [11:58 am]
Look Hailey, it’s complicated, OK. Layla and I aren’t even really going out… not officially anyway. I had no idea that you felt like that.  [11:59 am]

    NOAH

I’m tired of this game you’re playing. Whatever it is. For the last week, you’ve either not answered when I call your cell, or you don’t write back on chat. Well, you know what? Then screw chat.  [12:01 pm]

    NOAH

I’ll send you a private message. I suggest you read it. A friend would.  [12:01 pm]

    HAILEY

Wait!  [12:02 pm]
OK, I’m here. I’ll chat.  [12:02 pm]

PM to Hailey Milner:

[April 28 at 12:32 pm]

Okay, let’s try this for a change. Like I said, chat is making me crazy.

I want you to know that I really care about you. You were there for me last month when Jack disappeared, and you’ve listened to all my family crap that’s been going on lately.
It’s been a rough time in the Huntington household what with moving from Calgary, not getting to see my dad much, constantly arguing with my mom, and coping with Jack’s moodiness (that could be a full-time job!). But still, I feel like I can talk to you about these sorts of things. You don’t seem to judge me, or my family.

This brings me to the tough part… I’m sorry, Hailey, but it doesn’t feel like more than friendship. And I think I kinda like Layla. I didn’t plan for this to happen and I didn’t mean to hide things with Layla from you. I didn’t really know whether it would become anything. I still don’t. But I’d like the chance to see where it goes. I can see now how it must have looked to you and I think I understand why you got upset with me. It doesn’t have to change anything between us.

Hailey, I still want to talk with you, and be your friend… but you have to stop. No more “liking” and no more comments on Facebook; it’s as simple as that.

Log Out

Noah’s Log In:

N:

Hailey Milner commented on a photo of you. [April 28 at 3:42 pm]

Hailey Milner likes a photo of you. [April 28 at 3:51 pm]

Hailey Milner likes your comment. [April 28 at 4:17 pm]
Chat:

JACK

I see your *stalker* hasn’t gotten the hint.  [4:42 pm]

NOAH

Jack. 😊  [4:45 pm]

She’s not a stalker.  [4:45 pm]

She’s just…  [4:46 pm]

JACK

Just what?  [4:46 pm]

enthusiastic?  [4:47 pm]

eager?  [4:47 pm]

zealous?  [4:47 pm]

fanatical?  [4:47 pm]

passionate?  [4:47 pm]

ardent?  [4:47 pm]

NOAH

Your mind works in mysterious ways.  [4:49 pm]

JACK

Yeah, and so does the thesaurus.  [4:50 pm]

Some of that stuff she’s “liking” dates back to 2010.  [4:51 pm]

That’s weird, Noah. She didn’t even know you in 2010.  [4:51 pm]

Maybe you need to give her a little space…  [4:54 pm]

NOAH

I know you’re right. I just didn’t want it to have to be like this. 😊  [4:56 pm]

She’s not always like this. Sometimes she’s… Hailey. And then other times, she’s this whole other psycho girl I don’t even know.  [4:59 pm]

This will all blow over.  [5:01 pm]

She’ll get over it.  [5:01 pm]

Right?  [5:03 pm]

Log Out
Chapter 9

Noah’s Log In:

N:

Ellen Jones, Owen Richardson and 15 others posted on your Wall.
[May 12 at 8:45 am]

Samantha Sherry, Joyce Potter, Hailey Milner and 8 others like a post on your wall.
[May 12 at 10:03 am]

W:

Jack Huntington: Happy Birthday to me. Happy Birthday to me. Happy Birthday dear M-E. Happy Birthday to me!
[May 12 at 10:03 am]

+ You, Kyle Ritchie, Hailey Milner and 9 others like this.

Com:

Jack Huntington: Oh right, and HBD to you, too.
[May 12 at 10:04 am]

Jack Huntington: :P
[May 12 at 10:04 am]

Noah Huntington: Don’t worry, bro. Deep down, I know you care about me.
[May 12 at 10:06 am]

[May 12 at 10:07 am]

Joyce Potter: Happy Birthday to my favourite twins! Wow, is it really May? I can’t believe it’s been two and a half months since you guys moved to Victoria. Miss you!
[May 12 at 10:23 am]

+ Noah Huntington and Jack Huntington likes this.
[May 12 at 10:31 am]
  + Noah Huntington and Trevor Jacobs like this.

Jordan Mitchell: Happy Bday, man! Let me know the next weekend you’re back in Cowtown, and we’ll celebrate Albertan style!
[May 12 at 11:24 am]
  + Noah Huntington likes this.

Hailey Milner: HAPPY BIRTHDAY! ;)
[May 12 at 11:41 am]

Isabella Smith: Happy Birthday, Noah! You rock! Layla’s a lucky gal! 😊
[May 12 at 11:44 am]
  + Noah Huntington and Layla Thompson like this.

Chat:

LAYLA
Hey there, birthday boy!  [11:51 am]

NOAH
😊  [11:53 am]

LAYLA
Big day so far?  [11:53 am]

NOAH
Nah, nothing too huge.  [11:53 am]

My dad sent a card. He got us golf memberships here at Red Wood Golf Club for the summer.  [11:54 am]
LAYLA
You play golf?  [11:54 am]

NOAH
Not yet. But I’m super pumped to learn!   [11:54 am]
Jack, on the other hand, is being a poor sport (as always). He was hoping for cash.  
[11:55 am]

LAYLA
Well, that’s Jack for ya. ;)  [11:56 am]

NOAH
No kidding.  [11:56 am]

LAYLA
So, all set for the bonfire tonight?!  [11:58 am]

NOAH
Yeah! Part of my mom’s bday present to me is an extended curfew tonight.  [11:59 am]

LAYLA
Awesome!  [12:01 pm]
What’s the other part?!  [12:01 pm]

NOAH
She got two movie passes for me, and book for Jack. I think I got the better deal! 😊  
[12:01 pm]

So I guess it’s my treat next time we go to the movies! ;)  [12:01 pm]

LAYLA
😊  [12:02 pm]

About tonight, I know this might sound strange, but do you think we could invite Hailey? 
It’s just that I ran into Sophia yesterday at 7-Eleven, and I invited her. I don’t want 
Hailey to be mad at me.  [12:02 pm]

NOAH
No.  [12:03 pm]
“No.” That’s it?  [12:03 pm]

NOAH

I said no, OK?  [12:05 pm]

It’s my birthday, and I don’t want crazies at my bonfire.  [12:05 pm]

LAYLA

Whoa, where’d this come from?  [12:06 pm]

“Crazy” is a bit harsh, Noah.  [12:06 pm]

NOAH

Not if you had to put up with what I have.  [12:07 pm]

It’s not like we hang out with her, Layla. It’s been at least three weeks since I’ve even seen her at school. I gave her a chance to quit acting like a stalker and she still hasn’t stopped.  [12:07 pm]

I’m sick of it. I don’t want her near me.  [12:08 pm]

LAYLA

She’s not acting like herself lately.  [12:10 pm]

I don’t think you should write her off.  [12:10 pm]

NOAH

Give me one good reason.  [12:11 pm]

LAYLA

It’s complicated…  [12:13 pm]

NOAH

That’s what everyone keeps telling me. But what no one will tell me is WHY. [12:14 pm]

LAYLA

You should talk to Hailey.  [12:14 pm]

NOAH

I tried!  [12:15 pm]

And why are you defending her? I thought you’d feel – I don’t know – protective of me or something.  [12:15 pm]
LAYLA

Hailey’s harmless. [12:16 pm]

NOAH

Well, I was looking for a little backup. [12:16 pm]
But I guess not. [12:17 pm]
Happy Birthday to me. [12:17 pm]

LAYLA

Noah ☺ [12:18 pm]
Let’s just focus on the bonfire and having a good time tonight. [12:18 pm]
I’m sorry I brought it up. [12:18 pm]
Happy Birthday, sweetie. See you later. [12:21 pm]

Log Out

Noah’s Log In:

N:

Cody Charles, Trevor Jacobs, Alec Payne and 32 others posted on your Wall.
[May 12 at 4:08 pm]

SU:

Noah Huntington: Thanks for all the bday wishes everyone! Definitely feelin’ the love. Seventeen’s gonna be a rad year.
[May 12 at 4:12 pm]

+ Hailey Milner and 8 others like this.
Chat:

JACK

Hey, I think I’ll drop by the bonfire only for a little bit tonight. [4:20 pm]
Not really my thing. [4:21 pm]

NOAH

Somehow that doesn’t surprise me. [4:23 pm]
You can bring some of your chess club geeks, too, if you like. [4:23 pm]

JACK

Ha. Ha. Always sticking it to me. Even on our birthday. [4:24 pm]
Speaking of constant bothers… [4:24 pm]
I saw that Hailey wrote on your wall today. So, she’s still at it then? How long has it been altogether – two weeks? Three weeks? [4:25 pm]

NOAH

Yep. About three weeks. 😊 [4:25 pm]
It’s not as in-your-face like it was about two weeks ago. But yeah, it’s pretty clear that she’s still creeping my profile on a regular basis. [4:26 pm]

JACK

I thought you were going to deal with this, like ages ago. [4:27 pm]
What are you waiting for? Why don’t you just unfriend her already? [4:28 pm]

NOAH

That’s what Mom suggested, too. But she doesn’t really “get” Facebook. [4:29 pm]
I really thought that Hailey would just stop. [4:29 pm]
Unfriending her seems harsh. [4:30 pm]
Or what if it drove her to do something really crazy? I don’t want her getting even more messed up. [4:31 pm]

JACK

Wow, the ego on this guy. [4:32 pm]
You think she’ll go nuts because of you? [4:32 pm]
Fat chance! [4:33 pm]

NOAH

You never know. She is acting really strange already… [4:33 pm]

JACK

I wouldn’t bet on it. [4:34 pm]

NOAH

Well, anyway, now it’s really ticking me off. It’s starting to make things difficult with Layla ‘cause she thinks I should give Hailey another chance. [4:36 pm]

JACK

I can kinda see Layla’s point. From what I’ve heard around school, Hailey’s been through a lot. [4:37 pm]

NOAH

Wow, Jack being sensitive?? Pigs can fly! [4:38 pm]

JACK

Whatever, dude. [4:40 pm]

Fine. Friend her; unfriend her. I don’t really care. [4:40 pm]

NOAH

Agh, I don’t know. [4:41 pm]

Maybe. [4:42 pm]

PM to Hailey Milner:
[May 12 at 4:53 pm]

I’m sorry, Hailey. I’m just tired of all this.
AS:

Edit Privacy Settings: Hailey Milner has been added to your “Restricted Profile” list.  
[May 12 at 4:54 pm]

Log Out

Hailey’s Log In:

Chat:

HAILEY
He blocked me!  [6:13 pm]

SOPHIA
Huh?  [6:15 pm]
Wait, this is about Noah, isn’t it?  [6:15 pm]
It’s always about Noah these days, Hailey.  [6:15 pm]
Never “Hi Soph, how’s it going with you?”  [6:16 pm]

HAILEY
Sophia, this is important.  [6:17 pm]
He won’t let me see his entire profile anymore!  [6:17 pm]

SOPHIA
It’s really not that big of a deal in the grand scheme of things, Hailey.  [6:18 pm]
In fact, maybe this is a good thing.  [6:18 pm]

HAILEY
What do you mean by that?  [6:19 pm]

SOPHIA
I think you know what I mean.  [6:19 pm]
You’ve been acting weird about Noah for weeks.  [6:20 pm]
Everyone can see it online!  [6:20 pm]
And if what I’ve heard from Layla is true…  [6:21 pm]
Then, honestly, I don’t blame the guy.  [6:21 pm]

HAILEY

Wait, Layla?  [6:22 pm]
You talk about me with Layla? Since when?  [6:22 pm]
Exactly whose side are you on, Sophia?!  [6:23 pm]

SOPHIA

Ugh, Hailey. There are no sides here.  [6:23 pm]

HAILEY

Yes, there are! You said before that you were on my side.  [6:24 pm]
Looks like that has changed.  [6:24 pm]
Layla stole him… And now she’s stealing you.  [6:24 pm]

SOPHIA

Hailey, don’t be ridiculous!  [6:26 pm]
Grrrr. You’re so hard to talk to these days!  [6:26 pm]
Listen, maybe Noah blocking you is a sign. Now you and I can have some time to hang out together again. You know, get your mind off things.  [6:29 pm]

HAILEY

You’re friends with him on Facebook, right?  [6:31 pm]
Maybe you could come over tonight, and I could use your account to see his profile? Just once. That’s all.  [6:32 pm]

Or even better, I think he’s having a bonfire on the beach tonight for his birthday. Maybe we could crash it together?  [6:34 pm]

SOPHIA

You are officially off-your-rocker.  [6:37 pm]
Take a moment, and really listen to yourself, Hailey.  [6:38 pm]
Yes, I’m friends with him on Facebook. But I would never let you look at his account, especially after he’s blocked you.  [6:39 pm]
Get the hint, Hailey: he needs space.  [6:40 pm]
And btw, I can’t crash the bonfire… because I’m already invited.  [6:42 pm]

HAILEY

What?!  [6:42 pm]

SOPHIA

Layla invited me.  [6:43 pm]

HAILEY

Wow… You used to be my best friend.  [6:43 pm]

SOPHIA

“Used to be?”  [6:45 pm]

That hurts, Hails.  [6:45 pm]

You know what? I have been nothing but supportive all year. Even when you’ve pushed me away, I held on because I knew you needed someone.  [6:47 pm]

This is the last straw.  [6:47 pm]

You’re on your own.  [6:50 pm]

Log Out

Hailey’s Log In:

SU:
Hailey Milner: Beach bonfires are for hipster wannabes.
[May 12 at 9:36 pm]

Log Out
Hailey’s Log In:

SU:
Hailey Milner: Math homework sucks. 😊
[May 15 at 7:15 pm]

Log Out

Hailey’s Log In:

W:

Kyle Ritchie: Haven’t seen ya around school much, Hails. What’s up?
[May 18 at 1:02 pm]

Com:

Kyle Ritchie: Hails, if you could return my copy of The Catcher in the Rye that you borrowed to the library – that’d be great. The overdue fines are killin’ me! :P
[May 21 at 3:49 pm]

Kyle Ritchie: HEEELLLLLLLOOOOoooooo?? Earth to Hailey!
[May 24 at 10:14 pm]

Log Out

Hailey’s Log In:

SU:
Hailey Milner: Table for one.
[May 28 at 3:10 pm]

Log Out
Chapter 10

Hailey’s Log In:

N:

Stephie Walker likes your photo album, “Hails and Zuzu: The Golden Years.”
[June 11 at 8:23 am]

NF:

Olivia Johnston > Zoe Milner

Thinking of you today, Zuzu.
[June 11 at 8:49 am]

Zachary Milner-Kotez > Zoe Milner

All our love to you, Zoe. From Aunty Shelley, Uncle Marv, and me.
[June 11 at 9:05 am]

Sophia Baron > Zoe Milner

One year ago today, all of our lives changed forever. You left for a better place. I know you are with the angels, dear Zoe. Not a day goes by without me thinking of you. You touched so many hearts in the years that we had you. You were like the older sister I never had. Rest in peace. xo
[June 11 at 9:11 am]

Liam Mann > Zoe Milner

You are deeply missed.
[June 11 at 9:24 am]

Ethan Scott > Zoe Milner

A good friend cut down from life too soon. RIP, Zoe.
[June 11 at 9:38 am]
Kate Trundel > Zoe Milner

Zoe, my bestie! Your zest for life and adventure has never been matched. You taught me to love each person and each day as if it’s the last. McGill doesn’t know what it’s missing, Zuzu. Roomies forever. Hugs to the heavens. Ciao bella, see you in my dreams.
xoxoxo
[June 11 at 9:43 am]

Layla Thompson > Zoe Milner

Remembering your smile and your laughter on the basketball court. RIP.
[June 11 at 9:46 am]

SU:

Hailey Milner: Not going to school today. Staying huddled under my covers.
[June 11 at 9:55 am]

Log Out

Zoe’s Log In:

Welcome to Facebook! Please sign in.
Email: Zuzu1993@gotmail.com
Password: McGillRulz!

Pro:

Zoe Milner

Favourite Quotations:
“A friend is one who knows you and loves you just the same.” – Elbert Hubbard

Favourite Sports: Basketball, Beach Volleyball, Swimming, Cycling, Wall Climbing.

Arts and Entertainment:

Activities and Interests:
Interests: Food Network, Hiking, Chocolate Chip Cookies, Sunbathing.
Other Pages/Groups: Pre-Architecture at McGill Fall 2011, Tolmie’s Tigers Bball 2011.

Basic Information:
About You: A small-city girl ready for the big wide world! Next up, McGill! Woot!
Interested in: Men
Relationship Status: Single
Sex: Female
Email: Zuzu1993@gotmail.com

Relationships:
Hailey Milner (sister) – Mount Tolmie Secondary
Gloria Milner (mother) - Little Fox Books (owner)

Friends (487)
N:

Emily Hannok and 53 others have posted on your Wall.
[June 11 at 10:14 am]

Jill Nemick commented on a photo of you.
[June 11 at 10:22 am]

Sam Jones tagged you in a wall post.
[June 11 at 10:25 am]

Olivia Johnston likes a photo of you.
[June 11 at 10:37 am]

PM:

7 UNREAD messages from Hailey Milner.

PM from Hailey Milner:
[June 11 at 10:51 am]

When I woke up today, I saw the date through bleary morning eyes: June 11th. I dared to hope for a second that this past year was just a dream. 9:32 AM. Still time to warn you. But then… there it was, the stubborn, unforgiving number: 2012.

A year too late.

You’re lost again.

It wasn’t your fault, Zoe! It’s so unfair. Why did it have to be you? I didn’t get to say goodbye. I should have stayed by you. I failed you, Zoe.

Maybe it’s my fault? Maybe if I’d stayed, you would have been okay? Maybe you would have made it through the night with me there? I should have been there.

I was scared.
I’m sorry, Zoe.

You lay on the bed; your face staring upwards. Your eyes were half closed, and tubes entered your mouth and nose. Instead of my vibrant sister, this unrecognizable human form. I didn’t want to look anymore. I didn’t want to see my big sister that way.

I overheard the doctor telling Mom about CT scans, and a hemorrhage in your brain. But I didn’t know what those words meant. I didn’t know how serious things really were.

Many minutes that felt like hours passed, Dad and I just sat in silence in the waiting room, the faint rhythmic sound of the mechanical ventilator coming from inside your room the only noise. A torturous waiting game. Finally, I was allowed to enter your room. I stood awkwardly by your bed, not sure if I should stay longer, or let Dad have his turn. Then, for the first time, your body stirred. Hope, but only for an instant. A trickle of vomit crept from your mouth and your eyes rolled back into your head.

Immediately, the room buzzed with activity. The nurse on duty rushed in directing me out of view. After that, when Mom asked Dad to take me home, I just let him lead me away.

I should have never left.

But you were supposed to get better. You were supposed to come home.

Instead, one year ago today… you didn’t come back. How could you leave without letting me say how much I love you?

The day you died, Zoe, the best part of me died with you.

Log Out
Hailey’s Log In:

NF:

Hailey Milner > Zoe Milner

Without you, life will never be the same. I love you, Zoe. Rest in peace.
[June 11 at 11:23 am]

+ Sophia Baron, Gloria Milner, Isabella Smith and 29 others like this.

Com:

Kate Trundel: Be strong, Hails. One day at a time. That’s what gets me through. Digi-Hugs from Montreal, kiddo.
[June 11 at 11:38 am]

Hailey Milner: Thanks, Katie. I could sure use the real thing right about now.
[June 11 at 11:39 am]

Layla Thompson: hugs!
[June 11 at 12:05 pm]

Olivia Johnston: Hugs and kisses!
[June 11 at 12:08 pm]

Kyle Ritchie: xx
[June 11 at 12:13 pm]

Emily Hannok: Bear hug!
[June 11 at 12:17 pm]

Sam Jones: Thinking of you, Hailey. My condolences. (Kyle, you softie)
[June 11 at 12:18 pm]

Sophia Baron: I’m on it, Hails. On my way over.
[June 11 at 12:25 pm]

Log Out
Chapter 11

Hailey’s Log In:

SU:

Hailey Milner: A slow day at home, making Zoe’s special muffin recipe… more like making a gooey mess in the kitchen… one I hope will turn into proper muffins.

[June 12 at 2:54 pm]

+ 5 people like this.

Chat:

SOPHIA

Feelin’ any better today, Hails? [3:21 pm]

HAILEY

A bit, I guess. [3:21 pm]

It’s a long road. [3:21 pm]

Thanks for being there for me, Soph. [3:22 pm]

Especially after the way I’ve been acting... [3:23 pm]

SOPHIA

Say no more. [3:23 pm]

As they say, water under the bridge. [3:23 pm]

HAILEY

Who says that? [3:24 pm]

SOPHIA

I don’t know. [3:24 pm]

People. [3:24 pm]
HAILEY

😊 [3:25 pm]

SOPHIA

There’s the Hailey I grew up with. [3:26 pm]

HAILEY

Things have changed, Soph. [3:27 pm]

SOPHIA

I know. I know. [3:28 pm]

They will never be like they were. [3:28 pm]

All the same, it’s nice to have you back. [3:30 pm]

HAILEY

I feel like I’ve messed up a lot of things this year. [3:31 pm]

It’s embarrassing. So many people, some I don’t even know, have seen me at my worst. I thought I was under the radar, but no, thanks to Facebook, everything was out there for the whole world to see. [3:33 pm]

I certainly have some explaining to do. [3:34 pm]

SOPHIA

I bet I know who’s first on your list. [3:34 pm]

HAILEY

Do you think he’ll forgive me? [3:35 pm]

SOPHIA

I’m not sure, Hails. [3:35 pm]

Only one way to find out… [3:36 pm]
PM to Noah Huntington:
[June 12 at 4:47 pm]

Hi Noah,

Not that I’m about to give you any excuses or anything, ‘cause I know that I’m probably the last person on Earth that you feel like you’d want to hear from right now. But there’s something I should have told you a long time ago, something that I need to get off my chest. Somehow I hope it will explain some things to you…

My sister died last June.

It’s too bad you didn’t get a chance to meet Zoe. She was a special kind of person. I guess you could say she was popular, but it was more than that – Zoe could make friends with everyone: the goths, the jocks, and everybody in between. Everyone loved Zoe. On the outside, she was your typical teenaged girl. She had shoulder length dirty blond hair, and piercing gray eyes. Zoe had SO much energy. She was on every team, and a member of every club; she had a part time job, she hung out with friends, and still she had exemplary grades. So when February rolled around last year and Zoe got early acceptance into McGill, no one was surprised. McGill was her first pick. She’d planned to take pre-architecture… or Fine Arts. She was going to see where the wind blew her. And that was the kind of person that she was.

But, Zoe never got to go to McGill. She didn’t even get to graduate high school.

On her seventeenth birthday, Zoe started dropping hints to our parents about how nice it would be to have more independence… and by that, she meant her first car! My dad
always had a soft spot for Zoe, so one day on a whim he went and bought a well-used 1999 Chevrolet Metro – without consulting with my mom. That dirty little blue beater became Zoe’s prized possession.

Gunther, as Zoe fondly named it, was almost as old as me! It even had a cassette player in the front dash. Zoe and I would drive around town with the speakers cranked as loud as they would go playing our dad’s old mix tapes. Those days were my favourites with Zoe.

Everything in all our lives would change forever because of that little blue car…

It was Saturday June 11th and Zoe was driving home from her early shift at the pool, taking her usual route home. A picture perfect Saturday with a taste of summer in the air. Just as Zoe was entering an intersection, a GMC Yukon collided with her car; a direct T-bone hit to the driver’s side door. The woman driving the SUV had been texting on her cell and hadn’t noticed the light turn red.

The driver walked free from the scene of the accident. But Zoe’s little Gunther had been completely smashed in.

The EMTs pried the door off the car, and rushed Zoe to Centennial Hospital. And there I was at home that morning, sitting on the couch in the sunny living room, waiting for Zoe to pick me up and to take me to soccer practice.

When we got the call, my mom, dad, and I drove silently to the hospital. All I knew was that there had been an accident, and that Zoe was injured.

In the pediatric intensive care unit, the smell of cleaning solution mixed with the stench of dried blood. My dad and I sat impatiently in the PICU waiting room. Not speaking.
When my mom finally needed a break, it was my turn to be with Zoe. I scanned the room for her. The body lying awkwardly on her back in the bed closest to me was my sister. Ventilation tubes running unnaturally into her mouth and nose. Underneath the thin white knitted blanket, her legs were splayed abnormally to the side. The colour of her face nearly matched that blanket. I waved my hand in front of her eyes to see if she was awake. She didn’t move. Feeding tubes and intravenous lines entered all along her arms while multiple machines displayed her vitals: the numbers flickered up and down.

Looking out the window to the waiting room, the world seemed to run in slow motion; my mom’s shoulders heaved with each new dry sob, and my dad stared stoically ahead. He had already started to blame himself for buying her the car – for everything. The walls around his soul had begun to rise in that little hospital waiting room. He’s never been the same. The dad that I knew vanished.

When Zoe started to vomit, the room got crowded; nurses rushed in and out. My mom stayed behind with Zoe and my dad took me home. No one offered any explanations. No one warned me about how serious Zoe’s hemorrhage really was. My parents should have told me, someone should have told me! Instead of squeezing Zoe’s hand and whispering to her that I wouldn’t leave her side, I left the room obediently.

The phone call came in the middle of the night, a shrill bleating. Through the open door of my room, I could hear my dad’s voice quietly talking on the phone. When he hung up, I expected to hear his footsteps on the stairs, but they never came. I crept downstairs to find him and was startled by a dark figure in the room. Moonlight pouring in the bay window revealed the dark figure to be my dad. He was just sitting there. Not staring out the window, but not really looking anywhere in the room either.
I sat down on the couch and waited for him to speak. We waited in the dark for quite a while. I suppose it must have been difficult for him to even form the words.

“She’s gone,” was all he said.

We sat in the darkness.

I didn’t want to believe it. I had sat at the kitchen table eating breakfast with her just that morning and discussed something so insignificant I can’t believe I remember it – whether you can wear bright coloured tights in PE class. My last chance, my last bit of Zoe, and I didn’t even know it. I decided that the hospital must have gotten it wrong. My dad had said she was “gone,” so my heart maintained that Zoe had run away or maybe left early for McGill. One thing I was sure of: that girl lying in the hospital bed looked nothing like the sister I grew up with. I settled the whole thing in my mind: it probably wasn’t even her car. Any moment now, Zoe was going to burst through the door with a big grin on her face.

The next thing I remember is standing outdoors in the corner of the Bentley Bay cemetery. Grandma Milner, my dad’s mom, was there, and a few of my aunts and uncles. Sophia was there, too. The ceremony whirled and swirled about me. It was a beautiful summer’s day but everyone was dressed in black. So much natural beauty around us, yet I couldn’t look anywhere except at the small dark hole in the ground.

When we got back to our house, I dutifully returned to my spot on the sofa. Various relatives took turns sitting next to me, but I didn’t want to talk to anyone. I just wanted Zoe.
On the first day of school last fall, I was called to the office for a “chat.” I could tell that my teacher had warned the other students in my class, because when I returned, everyone looked at me differently, treated me with kid-gloves. I was “poor Hailey” before the first block of the semester was over.

So I started distancing myself from people, especially those who knew Zoe, like Sophia. But then you showed up…

You had no clue. (I mean that in a good way!). You weren’t tainted by the teachers’ warnings, or piteous stares. I could spend time with you and never be reminded about Zoe. You were a clean slate. But you were also more than that… I felt safe with you. I could tell that you had stuff in your life that you felt powerless over, too. You were scarred, but coping, and I wanted to be a part of that.

You brought out so many feelings in me – happiness, frustration, worry – and I think I got confused. I thought I had feelings for you, but really I’m starting to see that it was just me waking up from my emotional coma. I was just feeling again. Period.

I’m sorry you got stuck in the crossfire. I can see how I must have seemed like some crazed girl, but I just didn’t want to let go of that sensation of feeling. You felt like my only chance at normal. And I wasn’t going to let you go.

It’s strange, and I can’t quite explain how or why, but some small part of my heart still held out hope that Zoe would come back... I thought if I wished for it hard enough, or if I ignored any signs of the contrary, that there was still a glimmer of hope. It doesn’t make any sense, but that’s how I got through the year.
I should have told you this so long ago, but then that would have made it feel more real.

There, now I feel I have told you my deepest, darkest secret. I hope you can find it in your heart to forgive me. I’m turning a new leaf. I can see that I can’t do this on my own and that there are other people that need me as much as I need them. So, I’ve decided to try to be more open, and to talk about Zoe. It’s going to be really hard at first…

But Zoe would have wanted it that way.

Your friend,
Hailey M.


Chapter 12

Noah’s Log In:

SU:
Noah Huntington: Nothing’s ever what it seems to be.
[June 16 at 12:27 pm]

+ 4 people like this.

Com:
Layla Thompson: Everything OK?
[June 16 at 12:38 pm]

Noah Huntington: I think it will be. ‘Tis the season for second chances.
[June 16 at 12:43 pm] (2 likes)

Chat:

JACK
So explain to me, why did I have the unfortunate sight of Mom hugging the crap out of you earlier this morning in the kitchen?  [1:03 pm]

NOAH
You saw that?   [1:04 pm]

JACK
Yep.   [1:04 pm]

NOAH
So?   [1:04 pm]

I’ve been going through some stuff the last few days. Well, the last long while really… Mom and I haven’t exactly been getting along since we moved here.   [1:06 pm]

JACK
Really? You had me fooled.  [1:07 pm]

Not. (obviously) :P   [1:07 pm]
NOAH

Jack! Please, stop joking around for just one second. [1:08 pm]
I need you to hear this. [1:08 pm]
You’re important to me. And I should treat you better than I do. [1:09 pm]

JACK

Huh? [1:09 pm]

NOAH

I’m being dead serious. I just wanted you to know that. [1:10 pm]

JACK

What’s this all about? [1:10 pm]
Have your feelings for Layla touched your heart so much that it’s leaking out on unlucky bystanders? [1:11 pm]

NOAH

😊 [1:11 pm]

JACK

OK, OK, I’m listening now. Lay it on me. [1:12 pm]

NOAH

OK. [1:13 pm]
I miss our family, the way it was before. And I know that you do too. [1:13 pm]
The divorce made me feel so angry and I blamed Mom. She was the one to leave. She started the whole custody battle. She took us away from Dad. [1:14 pm]

It’s a long story, but recently Hailey shared an experience with me that made me wonder why I was fighting with Mom all the time. I mean, I didn’t even know what went wrong between Mom and Dad. No one talked about it. [1:15 pm]

So I called Dad on the phone last night. It was an uncomfortable conversation, but I asked him to treat me like an adult and to explain to me some unanswered questions about what happened to our family. [1:16 pm]

He told me the whole thing. From start to finish… He’d been unfaithful. [1:18 pm]
JACK

I don’t believe you.  [1:20 pm]

NOAH

Call him if you like.  [1:20 pm]

Oh, and when you thought you saw Mom hugging me earlier, it was actually the reverse: I was hugging the crap out of her.  [1:21 pm]

She’s put up with us the last four months, all while knowing the truth. We’ve been sullen and negative towards her, but still she didn’t want to ruin our image of Dad.  [1:22 pm]

JACK

But Dad would never do that.  [1:24 pm]

He’s a good guy.  [1:24 pm]

At least… I thought he was.  [1:26 pm]

NOAH

It would be stupid for me to say that this won’t change things between Dad and us because, let’s face it, it does.  [1:27 pm]

What he did was crappy.  [1:27 pm]

But, he’s still our dad.  [1:28 pm]

JACK

I don’t want to go to Calgary for the summer now.  [1:30 pm]

Not after all this.  [1:30 pm]

NOAH

It’s up to you.  [1:31 pm]

But I’m still gonna go…  [1:31 pm]

JACK

What about Mom?  [1:32 pm]

We’re just going to leave her here all alone in Victoria all summer?  [1:32 pm]
NOAH

I don’t think she’s really had a chance to get settled here without us biting her head off at every turn. Maybe she’ll like having a little time away from us? [1:32 pm]

JACK

Not likely. [1:33 pm]
LOL. :P [1:33 pm]

NOAH

Anyway, it’d be nice to have my “little” brother with me in Calgary. [1:34 pm]

JACK

Who are you calling little? [1:34 pm]

You’ve got a four minute head-start on life, and now I’m your “little” brother? [1:34 pm]

NOAH

You know what, I know this year has been really hard – on all of us – but I think our family is going to be alright. [1:35 pm]

Just the way it is. Mom here. Dad there. [1:35 pm]

Come with me. [1:36 pm]
Chapter 13

Hailey’s Log In:

SU:

Hailey Milner: Anyone have recommendations for some studying music? It might just make my math review package tolerable.
[June 22 at 4:16 pm]

Com:

Isabella Smith: “Wild Ones” by Flo Rida rocks!
[June 22 at 4:20 pm] (3 likes)

Sam Jones: Now don’t make fun, but “Glad You Came” by The Wanted is wicked-good.
[June 22 at 4:23 pm]

Chat:

SOPHIA

“Walk Off The Earth” is a pretty good band. And they’re Canadian too!  [4:36 pm]

HAILEY

Awesome, thanks Soph.  [4:38 pm]

Btw, how’re your exams going? Nearly done?  [4:38 pm]

SOPHIA

Exams are going well. But my final for Advanced Calculus isn’t until the very last day of school. Ugh.  [4:39 pm]

I want summer holidays already! 😊  [4:39 pm]
HAILEY
You’re lucky! I’m not gonna have much of a break this summer. Mr. Mitchell in the office recommended that I take Math 10 again in summer school now that I’m “more focused.” 😎 Blah. [4:40 pm]

SOPHIA
Emily took Chem 9 last year in summer school, and she had a great time! Evidently lots of cute boys go to summer school! ;) [4:41 pm]

Speaking of boys… did you ever hear back from Noah? [4:43 pm]

HAILEY
No. But Layla mentioned that he’s leaving for Calgary soon. Like on Canada Day or something. [4:44 pm]

SOPHIA
Well, I guess you can’t win them all. [4:44 pm]

Wanna hang out next week after exams are over? We could grab a slushie and hit the kiddie pool at Meadows Park. [4:46 pm]

HAILEY
Absolutely! 😊 [4:47 pm]

And you know what? [4:48 pm]

SOPHIA
What? [4:48 pm]

HAILEY
I think I’m finally over the whole Noah thing. [4:48 pm]

SOPHIA
Is that so? [4:49 pm]

HAILEY
I laid everything out on the line, and he didn’t even bother to get back to me. [4:50 pm]
SOPHIA

Good for you, Hails. [4:50 pm]
Boys don’t solve anything. [4:50 pm]
In fact, they only cause MORE problems! ;) [4:51 pm]

HAILEY

Haha! I’m with ya on that one, Soph. [4:51 pm]
Good luck on the rest of your finals! [4:52 pm]

SOPHIA

😊 [4:52 pm]

Log Out

Zoe’s Log In:

Welcome to Facebook! Please sign in.
Email: Zuzu1993@gotmail.com
Password: McGillRulz!

Incorrect email/password combination. Passwords are case sensitive.

Email: Zuzu1993@gotmail.com
Password: McGillRulz!

PM:
1 UNREAD message from Noah Huntington.
PM from Noah Huntington:
[June 30 at 7:35 pm]

Hi Zoe,

I feel a little silly writing this, because I know you’re never going to read it. Still, I figured I’d send it anyway. In fact, it kinda feels like writing to Santa Claus; you know the letter isn’t actually getting to him, but deep down in some part of your heart, you hold out a little bit of hope that he will. I hope that you will too, Zoe.

Anyway, my name is Noah, and I’m a friend of your sister’s. You and I never actually met, but in some small way I feel like I already know you. Like part of you is carried on in Hailey. When Hailey was smiling and laughing on the badminton court, there was some sort of glow about her... I’m not into all that voodoo stuff, but I like the idea that maybe it was you looking down on her, laughing with her.

I feel badly about how I treated Hailey this year. I could offer excuses that I didn’t know or she didn’t tell me, but the truth is, a good friend would’ve gotten to the bottom of it. I was so wrapped up in my own family stuff that I didn’t notice her struggling. Hailey needed a friend, and I didn’t measure up. From now on, I’ll watch over her for you.

I promise.

Hailey loves you and misses you. Rest in peace, sweet Zoe.
AS:

Security: Deactivate your account

Are you sure you want to deactivate your account?
Yes    No

Your account has been deactivated.

Log Out
Epilogue

Dear Zoe,  

August 25, 2012

Dad gave me this journal as a birthday present before he left last week. He said I should use it to write down my thoughts and feelings. But I never knew what to write to myself. Today is my sweet sixteen, so I thought I would write to you.

Big changes have been coming my way lately. I'm starting eleventh grade at Ross Bay Secondary in a few days. I'm a little bit nervous about starting a new school, but I think it would be nice to have a fresh start this year. This way, I can really put last year behind me. No more Mr. Mitchell poking his nose in all my business! I like the idea of that.

There have been some adjustments at home too. Mom thought it would be best if we went to family counseling this summer. We've been to a few sessions, but I'm not sure if it's working. Dad decided to go on a solo holiday for a couple weeks - hiking in the mountains. Mom helped him pack his outdoor gear, but she seemed a bit sad when he left. I don't know what's going to happen with them. All I can do is wait and see.
So, for now it's just Mom and me at home. We've never really talked since the accident. Like heart-to-heart. But last week we started to sort some of the things in your room, and when Mom found your stash of alcohol in the closet, she began to cry. I didn't know what to do; I just sat on your bed and patted her back. Then after a few moments, her crying turned into laughter. I don't know what she was laughing about, but then I started to laugh too. If anyone were to have looked in, we would have looked crazy, the two of us holding ciders and laughing on your bed. But that was just what we needed.

After we finished boxing up your things, I just didn't want to leave the room. Mom surprised me by suggesting that I move into your room. I mean, it's bigger, but I still haven't decided if I will. I think it would be tough for me; although, maybe it would make me feel closer to you?

Now you're probably wondering whatever happened to my friend Noah. Well, he came back yesterday from spending his summer in Calgary. We've kept in touch a little bit, but mostly I get my updates about him from his girlfriend Layla. She told me that Jack decided to stay behind
in Calgary for the school year. I guess after this year, they'll both be
off to potentially different universities anyway, but still, the twins being
separated is hard to think about.

I never did tell Noah that I read the private message he'd sent you. All
in all, Noah's not a bad guy. In fact, I'll look forward to kicking his
butt on the badminton court on the side of the Ross Bay Beavers!

I got a 76% in Math 10 this summer! A definite improvement on my mark
from last year. I thought summer school was going to be really lame
and boring... but to my surprise, it wasn't! On my first day, I walked
into the classroom, and there in the second row was Kyle Ritchie from
the badminton team. We were study buddies for the summer and I
discovered he's actually not such a dork when you get to know him!

Go figure. 😊 It's almost kinda too bad that we won't be going to the
same school this year.

The other really important person that I'll miss when I go to my new
school is Sophia. Sophia's thinking about going to McGill in a couple
of years. So I guess you made your mark on her with respect to that!
As for me, I think I’m gonna stay in Victoria for university. That way, I can be with Mom and Dad. It’s a few years down the road, but I think they’ll still want me around a while longer.

I know they call it your “sweet sixteen,” but it kinda feels “bitter-sweet” without you here to share it with.

I’ve learned the hard way this year that you have to love what you have while you have it.

I miss you like crazy, Zoe… But I’m doing OK.

Love, Hailey

Your sister, always and forever.

xox
Note

1. (Carroll 105)
Bibliography


