

Chapter 1

Paige

His phone must be broken or out of battery. That's the only reason he wouldn't reply to me. ~~God,~~ I've missed him over the summer break.

Sports ~~C~~camp was great, but four weeks away from him has felt like a lifetime. Besides, I've decided over the summer that I'm finally ready to take our relationship to the next level.

I want him to be the one to ~~... you know ...~~
~~I~~ Take my V plates.

What normal guy would wait for a whole year before having sex ~~with his with-~~ his girlfriend? ~~I~~ the best kind of guy, that's who.

That's how I know he's the ~~one-~~
one.

~~As I make my way to the party,~~ the summer breeze makes me shiver slightly, even though it's still warm out and the sun is casting long shadows over the neighbourhood. ~~as I make my way to the party,~~

I know it's at Summer Holden's house. ~~I as it's~~ been all ~~over~~ Twitter and Facebook for the last week. I don't normally spend too much time on social media when I'm at Sports ~~C~~camp, but this year was different. It was the first time I actually had a boyfriend back home to think about, the first time I ~~was going to'd~~ be away from someone, and knew that I would really miss them.

Dad had explicitly told me **not** to take my phone, as it would **'distract me from the activities and getting the whole wilderness experience'**.

I normally listen to him, but I just couldn't stand the thought of not being in touch with Sam for ~~two~~ long weeks, so when I had the chance, I snuck my phone and charger into my backpack and happily went along to Sports ~~C~~camp.

I've been going every summer for as long as I can remember. It's right in the heart of Arizona, nestled between the towering mountains and the hot desert that covers most of the state. It's only two hours' drive south of Flagstaff where I live, so not a million miles away from home.

Right up until I was about ~~fifteen~~ I was taking part in all the sports and activities, but this year, as I'm ~~seventeen~~ they asked ~~me to be that I attend as~~ a camp supervisor, and I'm so glad I accepted ~~the offer~~. It really opened my eyes to what I could do when I graduate.

~~It got me've been~~ thinking about what course I ~~would need to take~~ to become a sports therapist.

But Dad has his heart set on me going into the family business, ~~and~~ becoming a doctor. He says I have all the attributes and skill sets to be the best. I get straight "A"s and do tons of volunteer work down at the ~~homeless soup kitchen.~~ ~~Dad,~~ ~~because he~~ says that it will look great on my college application.

That's the only reason I've been allowed to come out to this party in the first place. He's met Sam, and knows ~~that~~ he's a great guy. Respectful, kind and caring –

I would use either quotes or italics, but not both

Helen's

I have cut out a few "as" and "because". This is because they are redundant, the reader can guess them from the context
Helen's

all the things I need in a boyfriend. I mean, not forgetting the fact that he's the hottest guy I've ever seen definitely sealed the deal for me.

My phone vibrates in my pocket and I dig it out, hoping it will be Sam. ~~but~~ Disappointment floods me when I see it's a text from Mum.

Same with "but" here. It doesn't really add anything to the story.

Heleen

Mum: —*"Don't forget to be home by 12 sweetie. You father and I are trusting you to behave yourself tonight. Love you x"*

I sigh and send her a quick reply text back letting her know that I will be homeback before curfew, ~~and~~ not to worry.

If this is set in America should it be Mom?

Heleen

As I walk the few blocks to the party, I scroll through my messages to Sam that got no response.

Me: —*"Hey Babe. I'm missing you so much. What have you been up to? Paige x"*

Me: —*"Hey babe, don't know if you got my last message? Today we did a hike up the huge hill by the lake down here and I'm aching so bad! 😊 Can't wait to get home and see you. Hope you're having a great summer break? Paige xx"*

Me: —*"Hey babe, is everything ok? You're worrying me now. You haven't answered my calls or texts? Paige x"*

Me: —*"Sam – please call me. Paige x"*

After two weeks of not getting any reply, I d started to really worryed about him. He hadn't posted anything on his Instagram, which he loved doing. He wanted to be a photographer, ~~and~~ I loved that about him. He was so artsy ~~and creative~~ – whereas I didn't have a creative bone in my body. We complimented each other perfectly.

Cut out a few "ands". Again, these can easily be taken out and they slow down the story.

Heleen

I d wanted to come back so many times over the past fortnight, hitch a lift on a bus or something, but I d held off. ~~f when I realised that~~ it was just two short weeks, and Dead would be so disappointed in me if I just gave up. So I sucked it up – for fourteen long days.

You say JUST two short weeks, then fourteen LONG days. This doesn't really make sense. Maybe you could explain it further by saying something like, "But each of the fourteen days seemed endless." This is a place where "but" would be useful!

Heleen

As soon as I d got back today, I ran'd run the few blocks to his house to see him. ~~H~~but his mum had answered the door. Sheand told me that he'd gone to a party ~~tonight, though~~. ~~But~~ she didn't know where. She d invited me in, but I d declined. I was so desperate to see him, now that I knew he wasn't lying half dead in a ditch somewhere. It's lucky he wasn't, because when I finally saw him, I was going to kill him for making me worry this much. This wasn't like him.

I don't understand what you mean here, it's lucky he wasn't dead or it's lucky he wasn't home? If "dead" then that doesn't make sense to me. It's lucky he isn't dead because I'm going to kill him... is it tongue in cheek? If so, perhaps needs a bit more explanation.

Heleen

I don't really have many friends ~~that that could have + could have asked to checked~~ in on him to and find out whereat the hell he'd beenhas happened to him over the summer. OKk, I don't really have any friends, because I spend all my spare timeany spare time ~~that I have~~ with Sam, and honestly, I wouldn't have it any other

way. Plus, it means ~~that~~ I'm not distracted, ~~and~~ can concentrate on school and getting into an ~~Ivy~~ league college.

Don't get me wrong, I used to have a best friend in middle school, Kaylee Evans. We were inseparable at that age. But then high school started, and Sam came along, and before I knew it I was swept up in all the romance and forgetting to call her back. ~~Kaylee and I~~ We slowly drifted apart, and now we hardly ever speak. There was never any bitterness on her part, just understanding, and that kind of makes me miss her even more.

Which brings me to my current challenge of walking alone into Summer's house party, and somehow making it look like I belong.

Sam must be here, as this is the ~~biggest~~ ~~hugest~~ party in town, ~~a~~ A goodbye party to the end of summer before starting our senior year ~~of high school~~, ~~or~~ so she'd posted on her social media earlier today, ~~whilst~~ reminding everyone to bring a bottle. I guess her parents are out, or on holiday, how else would she be allowed to do this?

Heavy bass ~~starts to~~ enters my ears, and I raise my eyes, hastily stuffing my phone into my back pocket. I have ~~on~~ my skinny ripped jeans and strappy black top, ~~on~~ with my converse. My long brown hair hangs ~~down~~ in soft natural curls to my waist, and I think I look pretty good.

But as I watch silently from the curb, several groups of girls make their way into the house, ~~looking~~ like they're on project runway.

-I'm so ~~under~~ dressed it's stupid.

They're all wearing ~~mini~~ short-skirts, ~~extra-small~~ tiny denim shorts or the ~~tiniest~~ ~~shortest~~ dresses you've ever seen. My gaze falls to my clothes, and I sigh in defeat, but shake my head, shrugging it off, ~~i~~—it really ~~isn't important~~ ~~doesn't matter~~. I'm not here to impress anyone.

Sam knows me and loves me, ~~and~~ that's all that matters.

Trying to make myself feel brave, I force a deep breath and start making my way up the path towards the front door, passing several groups of guys on the front lawn, ~~shirtless and~~ clearly, already ~~pretty pretty~~ drunk ~~and shirtless~~.

I walk past them without anyone even noticing me, ~~—~~ ~~T~~ this is good ~~— a~~ ~~I don't like~~ attention, ~~it~~ always makes me uncomfortable.

Reaching the front door, I walk over the threshold and into the party, ~~T~~ the loud bass ~~from the music~~ vibrates through my body, making my heart beat even faster ~~—~~ if that's possible.

It's sensory overload in here. My eyes roam over the sweaty bodies, recognising a few people from school, ~~but~~ I'm not brave enough to approach them so I just walk straight past, hoping they don't notice me. Like I said, my shyness cripples me sometimes.

It smells of stale beer and cheap aftershave, ~~G~~ and girls are stumbling around from room to room, dragging their friends here and there with drinks in their hands.

I weave slowly through the rowdy crowd ~~of dancers~~ ~~of people dancing~~ in the front room, several of them are shouting over the music, ~~and~~ quite a few ~~are~~ making out against the walls. Heat rises on my cheeks and I hurry past ~~them~~ in embarrassment, ~~as~~ ~~I~~ ~~make~~ ~~ing~~ my way towards the kitchen.

Or Kaylee and me (depending on the speaker's voice) I changed it for clarity as wasn't clear who "we" was
Helen

Hugest is a strange choice of word and not one that is really correct to use as a comparative or superlative as huge is what's known as an "absolute adjective" - it is not capable of being compared to something else, as is already the "most" of its quality.
Helen

Removed - starts to - as I feel it is evident and also slows the pace.
Helen

I'm not expert on this but is this trainers/sneakers? Do you need to clarify this or is it obvious to your audience?
Helen

I have changed this around to avoid repetitions of short
Helen

I cut "from the music", because we know it's from the music, and if this was going to be explained it would have been better added earlier when you first mentioned the "loud bass"
Helen

I run my eyes over everyone in the room slowly, but still don't see him anywhere. ~~A huge guy barges into me from behind.~~

"Oh shit, sorry!" ~~he says. He's a huge guys says to me as he barges into me from behind,~~ causing me to fall forward slightly.

~~;~~ before I ~~steady~~ catch myself on the island in the middle of the ~~massive~~ huge kitchen.

He sways on the spot, as he looks down at me out of politeness. I nod at him to let him know that I'm fine, ~~and~~ no harm, before watching him continue ~~into the kitchen and~~ towards a couple of kegs and ice buckets ~~crammed with~~ bottles.

"Paige? Is that you?"

I turn at my name being shouted and see Kaylee waving me over.

A familiar and friendly face in an ocean of uncertainty.

I smile, and make my way over ~~to her,~~ dodging a ping-pong ball from a heated game of beer pong happening right in front of her.

She pulls me in for a hug before shouting over the music ~~at me.~~

"I thought that was you! I don't normally see you at these parties."

"Oh yea, well I guess it's not normally my scene. How's your summer been?" I shout back, cringing at my awkwardness.

"It's been amazing ~~;~~ beach days and parties every night. Demi even bagged herself a new man over the break, isn't that right Dem?!"

I pull back to see the group of girls she's with, and Kaylee thumbs towards a redhead girl down the end. They all start teasing ~~the redhead, her~~ before she laughs along with them and shouts back.

"Shut up Kay! It may come as a surprise to you, but I do have what it takes to bag a man. It's just taken me longer than I would ~~;~~ have liked."

They all start laughing loudly again before a couple of them smile at me and nod their heads ~~in~~ hello. I smile back, ~~and~~ wave my hand, before turning back to Kaylee.

"Hey Kaylee, have you seen Sam here tonight? I can't get hold of him and I guessed he might be here."

She shakes her head thoughtfully before turning to the girls.

"Hey guys, have any of you ~~seen~~ Sam here tonight? He's Paige's boyfriend and she can't find him."

"Sam ~~who?~~" one of the girls shouts over the music, ~~as she brings~~ bringing her cup to her mouth and ~~takes~~ taking a sip.

"Mendez," I say, hoping it will jog their memories.

"Oh uh, yea I think I saw him with his buddies by the stairs earlier, when we arrived," another says, and smiles kindly at me.

"Oh great, ~~OK~~ thanks."

"Kaylee, come on I really wanna dance, and I think I just spotted Scott Bishop and his hot man hulk of a cousin come in." ~~She~~ starts swinging her hips and gestures to the room next door and they all start giggling again.

I look back at Kaylee and she smiles at me.

"Wanna come?"

You need to clarify which room this is – kitchen or the room with the dancers?

Helen

Who is she?

Helen

I smile at her but shake my head softly.

"Thanks, but I really wanna find Sam first. Maybe later?"

"Sure, come find us." ~~She~~ She sings at me, as ~~her group of friends pull her~~ she gets pulled from the room towards the loud music. ~~by her group of friends.~~ They seem nice. Maybe I should make more of an effort with Kaylee and her ~~posse~~ group of friends.

I make my way back towards the stairs. ~~I~~ but still don't spot him. There's nothing for it but to go from room to room, however much I really don't want to ~~do it~~.

The back yard is a huge, sprawling green space that leads down to a private area, complete with ~~J~~ Jacuzzi at the end. A big crowd of ~~pretty tipsy drunk~~ high school students, and what looks like a few college ~~ones~~ students, stand around the Olympic size swimming pool, drinking and shouting.

I walk past the pool quickly and see some girls taking part in a wet t-shirt competition. I can't help but stare, as ~~the~~ a guy with the hose completely drenches the screaming girls, and the guys all start hollering. Their white shirts cling to their bodies and you can clearly see everything ~~—~~, and I mean, *everything*.

I've changed this to avoid repeating "group of friends" but you don't have to keep the word "posse" if you don't feel it fits.
Helen

Better than "pretty drunk" (always better to use a whole word than another one with a qualifier, unless you have a specific reason for doing this). Unless you mean very drunk, in which case, perhaps use inebriated? Intoxicated? Or a slang term, tanked up for example
Helen