Can you fall in ♥ with someone you've never met?

TEXTROVERT

Lindsey Summers



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Summer is nearly over and Keeley is about to start her senior year when disaster strikes: she picks up the wrong cell phone by mistake. (2) Just her luck that it belongs to Talon, a totally arrogant jock (2) who's just left for football camp — with *her* phone. Keeley doesn't know him, but they'll need to rely on each other to forward their messages for an entire week.

But when true identities are revealed and secrets are exposed, will Keeley's feelings stay the same?

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wattpad

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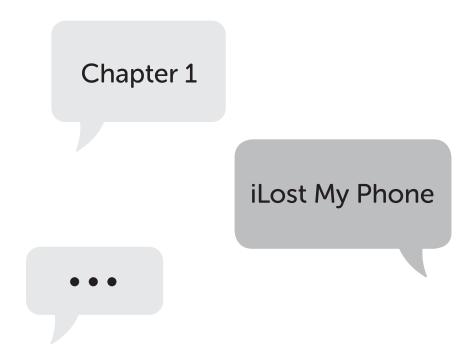
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For my Wattpad readers, I love you guys



Fate had a twisted sense of humor. Either that or it hated her, because there was no way she should have been paired with a twin like this.

"Come on, Keels," Zach pleaded. The wide-eyed, earnest expression might work on their mother, but Keeley knew better.

"You're not getting the keys," she told him.

"Please?"

"No way."

"You've had the car all day."

"And you got up an hour ago."

"So?" he taunted, acting nowhere near seventeen.

"It's already dark. That's a problem."

"It's summer. And you shouldn't be talking. You slept till noon yesterday."

She was hoping he'd missed that. "I was tired."

"Because reading is so exhausting."

"You don't get it." Marathon reading wasn't for the faint of heart. It took dedication and a big bladder to sit on a chair for hours on end.

Zach scoffed. "The only time you move is to turn a page or grab a snack."

"But I'm moving up here," she told him, tapping her temple.

"Keeley," he said in that placating tone that drove her nuts. "This is my first day off in three weeks, and as captain of the varsity football team -"

She rolled her brown eyes, the rich color identical to his. If she had to listen to his Mr. I-Am-Captain-Therefore-I-Am-God speech one more time, she'd pop him in the nose. He'd been strutting around the house ever since the team voted two weeks ago. Not that the decision was surprising. Zach was a natural leader. She just wished he would leave the need to control on the field. His attitude got real old, real fast.

"Mom and Dad gave the car to both of us so I have as much right to use it as you do," he concluded.

"And you drive it ninety percent of the time."

"Because I'm the one who actually *needs* it."

The implication hurt, but she let it go. It wasn't worth the headache. "Well, I need it now. The fair closes in thirty minutes."

"Then get Nicky to drive you home. I'm sure she's here somewhere."

Of course Nicky was here. They'd been best friends since kindergarten. Most people considered Nicky her twin, not Zach. But keeping the car was about principles. Keeley had the keys first, therefore she got the car, even if there was someone else to give her a ride.

Just then Nicky came back from scoping out the line at the Ferris wheel. "It's not too long," she said. "But the fair closes in twenty minutes, so we should head over." Every year the girls rode it as their last hurrah of summer. Zach used to come with, but he stopped once they started middle school. Claimed he was above something so juvenile.

"See? Now hand over the keys," Zach said, wiggling his fingers in Keeley's face. "I have things to do."

Keeley batted his hand away. "Why are you in such a rush?" "Does it matter?"

That's when she knew. "You're going to Cort's house." Cort was Zach's best friend. He threw legendary parties whenever his parents were out of town. "I thought he was away for the weekend."

"He decided to stay home." Rubbing the back of his neck, Zach let out a long sigh. "Listen, if you give me the keys, I'll let you copy my homework."

It was a tempting offer since she hadn't opened a single textbook all summer. Enrolling in AP classes had seemed like a good idea last spring, especially because Zach and Nicky were in them, too, but now that summer was over and she was faced with a year of college-level work ... well, regret was creeping in.

"And I'll do your chores for a week," he added.

"A month," she countered.

"Two weeks."

"Three."

"Two and a half." When she started to protest, he tugged at the end of her ponytail, just like he used to when they were little. "Please? For me?"

She felt herself softening. Damn it. He didn't play fair. "Only if you promise to call if you need a ride home." Zach didn't drink a lot, but when he did, he went full throttle. She was always worried he might do something stupid like drink and drive. He was annoying, but he was her brother. She didn't want anything bad to happen to him. If she didn't look out for him, who would?

"And you'll cover for me with the parentals?" he asked.

She tossed him the keys. "Don't I always?"

"You're the best," he called over his shoulder as he jogged away.

"I think I know why he's in such a hurry," Nicky commented. She nodded toward a stunning redhead with fair skin and cleavage Keeley could only dream of. Zach leaned down to whisper in the girl's ear, then hooked an arm around her waist and led her to the exit.

"Not in the car. Absolutely not." Keeley dug in her purse, ready to call and chew him out. The last time Zach took a girl for a ride, Keeley found a bra in the backseat. "Um, Nicky ... you wouldn't happen to have my cell, would you?"

"Not again," Nicky groaned. "This is the third one you've lost in six months."

"You don't have to remind me. I was there," said Keeley. Her parents' lecture on responsibility still burned in her mind. "Do you have it?"

"You never gave it to me."

Cursing, Keeley sunk to her knees and dumped out her purse. She had to find that phone. Her parents would refuse to buy another one, and there was no way she was starting senior year cell-less.

Nicky crouched next to her. "You had it when we were pigging out on funnel cakes. I remember because Zach kept texting you."

"Right." Keeley had swallowed the last bite of funnel cake, downed the rest of her vanilla shake, grabbed her purse and then — "Crap! I think I left it on the table." Her parents were going to kill her. That phone was brand new. She hadn't even bought a case for it yet or downloaded any apps.

Nicky helped scoop up her stuff. "It's only been half an hour. It could still be there."

Biting her lip, Keeley glanced at the Ferris wheel. There was no way they could dash across the fairground to the food area and still make it back in time. But they couldn't *not* ride. It was tradition. Pushing herself off the ground, Keeley slung her purse over her shoulder and took off running. "Get in line," she yelled, ignoring Nicky's confused yelp. "I'll meet you there!"

Weaving her way through the crowds, she moved as quickly as she could, but there were too many people. Seeing a clear path around the perimeter of the fairground, she dashed to the outside

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edge and sprinted the rest of the way to the food area. Gasping for air, Keeley spotted the table and slowed to a walk, both legs trembling.

"Fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes till the fair closes," a voice announced over the loudspeaker.

"Please, please, please," she chanted. But when she got to the table, it was empty. Frustrated, Keeley kicked a chair and it toppled over. People started staring, some even pulling out their phones to record her. Face red, Keeley bent down to right it. That's when she spotted a black phone lying underneath the table, hidden by a patch of weeds. *Yes!* Luck was totally on her side today.

By the time she reached the Ferris wheel, Nicky was almost at the front of the line. "Did you find it?" Nicky asked as Keeley squeezed her way through.

Grinning, Keeley gave a thumbs-up. Nicky shook her head like she couldn't believe Keeley's luck. And frankly, neither could Keeley. It was a good thing she found it, too. She hadn't programmed a password yet. Zach had told her to as soon as she got it, but she'd ignored him. Maybe she would keep this incident to herself. Didn't want to hear the "I told you so." She hated that phrase. Was already bracing herself because she knew she'd hear it when he handed her his summer homework. *But maybe* ... Keeley eyed Nicky. "*Soo* ... how's the homework coming? You finished yet?"

A knowing smirk. "I thought you were copying off Zach."

"I can't copy word for word. The teachers will notice."

"What do you have left?" asked Nicky.

Keeley's expression turned sheepish. "All of it." She'd been *meaning* to start all summer.

"Why am I not surprised?"

"Procrastination invigorates me," Keeley insisted.

"And leaves you panicking. If you start tonight, you should finish in time. We have almost two weeks left." Nicky never left anything last minute. She was almost as prepared as Zach.

The line moved forward, and soon they were ushered to the loading area. One by one, the cars stopped at the bottom and people were let off and on. When it was their turn, Keeley carefully stepped into the swaying carriage and settled next to Nicky. They jerked forward as the ride started spinning.

"Then what about going to the library with me tomorrow?" Keeley asked her. Maybe she could convince Nicky to let her peek at some statistics graphs.

"I have summer school, remember?"

Of course she did. It was all part of the ten-year life plan Nicky mapped out one night during a sleepover. Keeley thought it was a joke until Nicky started taking courses at the community college. Even if Nicky couldn't help her study, maybe they could get together. Her social life had been pretty nonexistent this summer. "Well, what about getting dinner after? There's this little café on the pier I've been dying to try," Keeley suggested.

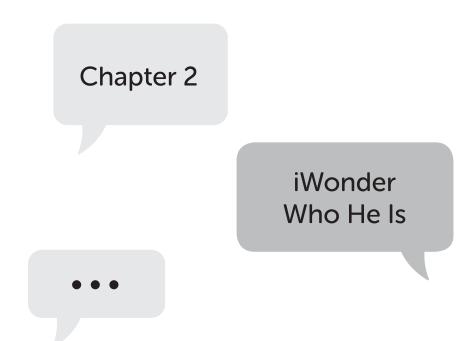
Nicky gave her an apologetic look. "I'm meeting with my study group. We're grabbing food on campus and then prepping for the final. Why don't you ask Zach? He'd go anywhere as long as there's food."

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"He's getting dinner with the team." It was depressing knowing they both had plans while she had a whole lot of nothing. It felt like everyone was leaving her behind, and the worst part was they didn't even seem to notice.

"We'll get together after finals," Nicky promised.

The ride came to an end and a bittersweet feeling swept over Keeley. Summer was almost over and now she was going to be a senior in high school. It was exciting, but also terrifying. Her future was a big question mark and she had no answer.



Later that night, she took Nicky's advice and cracked open the books. She hoped finishing an assignment would make her feel less like a loser who had nothing to do, but it took less than fifteen minutes before boredom set in. Promising herself to start tomorrow, she pushed the work to the other side of the bed and grabbed her laptop. Nothing cured boredom more than catching up on her favorite shows. About halfway through, her eyelids began to droop.

She didn't know how long she'd slept, but the ringing phone woke her up in seconds. Zach. The party. The redhead. Groggily, she answered, "The sex better have been worth waking me up for." There was a slight pause. "Now that sounds like something I'd like to hear more about."

She blinked, then bolted upright. Squinting against the harsh light of the screen, she saw "Unknown Caller." Alarmed, she asked, "Who's this? Where's my brother?" Keeley's dog, Tucker, who was lying at the foot of the bed, popped his head up.

"I have no idea and frankly, I don't care."

"Then why are you calling me? And how'd you get this number?"

"I dialed it." An implied "duh" to his tone.

She was too tired to deal with this. She should hang up.

"Hello? Are you there? Or did I lose you?" The voice paused. "Look, I don't know what you're on and I'm not going to ask, because I live by a strict plausible deniability rule, but you have my phone and I want it back."

Was this guy for real? She twisted to see the clock on her nightstand. "First off, it's one in the morning. I'm not on anything except sleep, which, I'll point out, you rudely woke me up from. And second, I don't have your phone."

"Yeah, you do," he insisted.

"I don't."

"That phone in your hand is mine. Not yours. *Mine*," he said, enunciating every word.

This had to be a prank. "Did my brother put you up to this? Is he trying to get back at me?" Crisscrossing her legs, Keeley hunched forward and rested her elbows on her thighs. Wisps of bangs too short to fit in her ponytail fell around her face.

"Unbelievable. I don't know what his problem is." She'd given him a fair deal for those keys.

"Would you just look through my phone?" he asked, sounding tired.

She didn't feel an ounce of sympathy. Not when this guy was being so rude. "I want serious groveling after I prove —" She swallowed the rest of the sentence as a picture of a red race car glowed on the screen.

"You said something about groveling ...?"

She refused to let her embarrassment show. "Does this mean you have my phone?"

"Is your background a picture of a brown dog?"

"That's Tucker." He wagged his tail at the sound of his name. Dropping her head to her knees, she wondered how this had happened. Wait. "Were you at the fair tonight?"

"Damn. Any chance you hung out at the tables by the food?" he asked.

And she'd thought she was lucky when she found the phone. What a load of crap. She flopped onto her mountain of pillows with a grunt.

"You're not on the toilet right now, are you? Because if you are, I'm hanging up."

"What? No!" she cried, horrified by the thought. "I'm on my bed."

"In that case, I'm all ears. Don't leave anything out."

Typical guy. Zach's friends were all the same. "How do you know I'm not some eighty-year-old woman who has dentures and wears flannel?" she asked.

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"There's no way your voice belongs to a little old lady. But fine, if you won't tell me what you're wearing, how about I tell you? Nothing but my lucky boxers, which seems fitting."

"How does it seem fitting?"

"I'm talking to you, aren't I?"

She smiled, even though she told herself not to. Man, this guy was shameless. Oddly enough, it made her want to respond in the same fashion.

"That got you, didn't it?" he asked. "Straight to the heart."

"No way," she lied.

He tsked. "Telling lies is a sin. I know I have a gift, especially when it comes to the ladies."

She rolled her eyes. "You're a cocky SOB, aren't you?"

"If by SOB, you mean sexually omnipotent boy. I am, for sure."

"Or a boy with sexually offensive behavior," Keeley countered.

"You know, you might want to rethink insulting the person who has your phone. Let's see, who can I prank call at one in the morning?" His voice sounded muffled. "Hmmm ... Nana? Uncle Tom? Cousin Louise?"

That was a bold move. He wouldn't dare ... would he? "Don't forget, I have your phone, too," she threatened.

"If you want to prank call people, be my guest. I'll even give you a list. Start with Marlene Baker. The girl refuses to leave me alone."

"I don't see why," she retorted. "I've been on the phone with you for five minutes and I have no desire to repeat the experience."

"Be nice, baby doll, or else," he warned.

"Or else what? And don't call me that."

"Then what should I call you?"

She hesitated. She knew nothing about this guy.

"Scared?" he asked. "I'll tell you my name if you tell me yours."

"I'm not scared," she protested. "Just cautious. You could be a serial killer or something. I don't even know how old you are."

"I'm in high school. How about you?"

"Same. I ..."

When it was clear she wasn't going to say more, he pointed out, "We're going to meet anyway to switch back our phones. What's the big deal?"

"You go first."

He sighed. "You always this difficult?"

"Now who's the one avoiding the question?"

A beat passed. Then another. "I'm Talon."

"That's unusual," she commented, not recognizing it. She wanted to ask for his last name, but then he would want to know hers, and when people in this town heard Brewer, they thought of Zach. As soon as they learned she was related to him, they launched into what a great player he was and asked a million questions about his plans for the future. It sucked that the most interesting thing about her was her brother.

"I told you mine. Now, what's yours?" he asked, ignoring her comment. "And don't think you can get out of it."

She wavered, still unsure about giving a complete stranger her name.

"Come on. Just tell me."

She swallowed. "It's Keeley."

He repeated her name under his breath. "It suits you."

She frowned. "How so?"

"It's a beautiful name for a beautiful voice," he declared. He sounded like a character out of a soap opera — dramatic and completely fake.

"Please stop. That's so lame."

"It's not lame," he grumbled, his voice back to normal.

"Beautiful name for a beautiful voice," she mocked.

"I don't sound like that. My voice is deeper, more masculine," he protested. "I — Hey! What's with the laughing?" But Keeley was too far gone to respond. "I'm going to hang up if you don't stop," he threatened.

"Wait, wait!" Keeley managed to say as she got her laughter under control. "I have a question."

"No, you don't. I'm going."

"I'm serious. I have a question."

"What?"

"Does that line"—she giggled, not being able to hold it back—"actually work?"

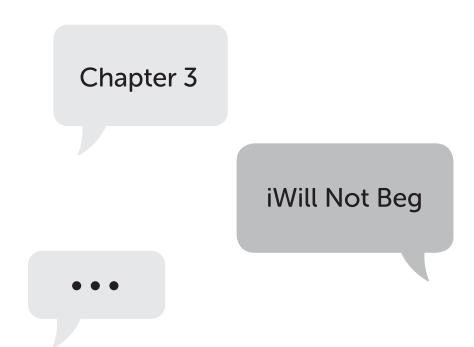
"Will you stop?!"

"Are you one of those guys who hits on girls at a shopping mall and uses lines like" — she deepened her voice — "'Do you come here often, baby?'"

Silence.

"Oh my God, you are!"

Talon didn't even bother responding as he hung up, leaving her with silence. She'd call him tomorrow and get her phone back. As she lay down, a little part of her wondered what he'd be like in person.



The next morning, Keeley woke to a shouting match between Zach and her parents. She sat on the second-floor landing, which overlooked the living room, and watched it all unfold. Zach, in the same clothes from yesterday, was on the couch with his arms crossed and a scowl on his face. Her mother was on a nearby chair, shaking her head in disappointment, while her father paced the living room.

"You could have gotten yourself killed!" her father roared. "Dad —"

"What were you thinking?!" His face was blotchy and red. "Dad —" "Obviously you weren't, were you? You put yourself and everybody else on the road in danger!"

Zach slapped a hand against the suede armrest. "I said I was sorry. And I got home fine. Nothing bad happened!"

And everyone says he's the smart one in the family, Keeley thought.

Her father's face was purple now, his voice low and even. Somehow that was scarier than the yelling. "You're grounded for the next month. You can't leave the house except to go to practice."

Zach leapt to his feet. "You can't do that! I'm captain of the team. I'm supposed to help the incoming freshmen —"

"Then you should have thought of that before drinking and driving!"

So that's what the fight was about. Why didn't he call her?

"Mom, please," Zach begged. "Talk to him."

"I agree with your father. It's bad enough you were drinking, but to drive? You should be grateful we're letting you play football."

For a second, Zach looked like he was going to argue, but he shut his mouth and stalked up the stairs. He came to an abrupt halt when he caught sight of Keeley. "It's all your fault!" he hissed so their parents couldn't hear.

"What did I do?"

"You know exactly what. I thought we had each other's backs. Guess I was wrong, *twin*."

The resentment in his voice made her stand. "I should be the one pissed off. What were you thinking?"

"What choice did I have? I was out past curfew. If Mom and Dad found out, they would have grounded me."

"You call me. You don't get behind the wheel."

"Are you serious? I call and text for an hour, and when I finally get through, you hang up on me."

He was full of crap. "Lie to Mom and Dad all you want, but don't lie to me. You probably wanted to impress that girl and -"

He shoved his phone in her face. Her name was displayed on every line of the call log, the time stamped between two and three a.m. Guilt hit her full force. "Zach, I -"

"Forget it," he scoffed and brushed past.

If something bad happened to him ...

The thought made her sick. "Wait, Zach." She grabbed his shoulder, but he shrugged her off. "I never got those," she called after him, but he didn't stop.

It was that boy. Talon. He was the reason Zach was mad. Rushing to her room, Keeley dialed her own phone — which he had — but it went to voice mail. Five seconds later, a text popped up.

Can't talk right now. Only text.

You hung up on my brother?!

He called at 2 a.m. Of course I hung up.

You should have told me. It was important.

More important than my beauty sleep? I don't think so. Lindsey Summers

I don't give a damn. He drove home drunk because he couldn't get a hold of me.

Not my problem.

How could you not care? What if he got in an accident??

Why are you mad at me? Your bro is the one who drove drunk. Hasn't he heard of Uber?

Of course he'd heard of it. But it wasn't like he could use Uber when their parents got the monthly bill. They would spot the charge in an instant. Talon had no right to judge.

What time are you free? We need to exchange our phones. The sooner, the better.

Can't. Left with my team for football camp today.

She must have read that wrong. Keeley blinked and then started to panic.

Why didn't you tell me this yesterday? We could have met this morning.

Bet you wish you hadn't laughed at me now, huh?

She didn't have her phone because he wanted payback? Of all the stupid, selfish reasons. If her parents found out, they'd never buy her a phone again.

What I wish is that you didn't exist. When are you coming back?

In a week.

What am I supposed to do till then?!

Dream of me. Word on the street is I'm pretty impressive, if you know what I mean. (3)

She stared at the winking emoji. He was obnoxious, but she had to admit he was also a little funny. In that annoying I-wantto-smack-you kind of way.

> And I'm sure the hefty fee you paid some girl to say that was well worth it. I need my phone.

Stop worrying. We'll just forward the texts and voice mails till I return.

Hell no! You've already proved you fail at that and there is no way I'm allowing you to go through my phone. It's cute you think I already haven't. BTW, only 20 numbers? Pretty pathetic.

There was a knock on the door and then her mom came in. "Oh good. You're up. Breakfast is ready."

When she got to the dining room, Zach was sitting at the table. She tried to catch his eye so she could explain the whole Talon debacle, but he pointedly looked away. An ache formed, but she pushed it away. He wasn't ready to listen to her. That was fine. She'd try again later.

Her mom walked in with a stack of pancakes. "Aren't you going to sit?"

"Just seeing if we need syrup or anything," Keeley replied. Forcing a smile, she took her usual seat across from Zach.

Breakfast was uncomfortable. Zach acted like she had the plague or something. If she was reaching for pancakes, he made sure he was nowhere near the syrup. If she grabbed a sausage, his hands would suddenly be far away from the ketchup. It was ridiculous and it ate away at her. Keeley grabbed her plate and stood. "I'm done."

"You can leave that there. Zach's doing the dishes," her dad informed her.

"It's okay. I can —"

"Leave it," her dad ordered.

She glanced at Zach, but his eyes were glued to the tablecloth. She couldn't say anything, not with their parents there, so she set down the plate and went into the living room. Out of habit, she

checked the phone for news from Nicky, but what she found was a flood of texts from Talon.

Did I hurt your feelings?

Still ignoring me?

99 bottles of beer on the wall, 99 bottlesof beer. Take one down, pass it around,98 bottles of beer on the wall.

98 bottles of beer on the wall, 98 bottlesof beer. Take one down, pass it around,97 bottles of beer on the wall.

97 bottles of beer on the wall, 97 bottles of beer ... I can do this all day you know.

She shook her head and scrolled through the other twenty texts saying the same thing.

You're like the song that never ends.

Where'd you go? I missed you.

Aren't you supposed to be playing football instead of annoying me?

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I'm on a bus. 3 more hours till we reach camp which means I'm all yours. Only 77 bottles to go. 🕐

There were at least seventy-seven other things she'd rather have than him. Zach talking to her, for starters.

Keeley jumped when her mom sank into the couch next to her. She quickly silenced the phone and flipped it over. Her mom would become suspicious if she saw that many texts, especially since they were coming from her own phone.

Her mom pushed some hair out of Keeley's face. "Is everything okay? Your dad and I noticed something was off at breakfast."

No matter what problems she had with Zach, she would never rat him out. "It's nothing to worry about."

"Was it about last night?"

"Seriously, Mom. It'll blow over. You know how Zach and I are. We fight and then make up five minutes later."

Her mom stayed put, clearly hoping Keeley would say more, but when Keeley didn't, she patted her knee. "Okay. Well, I'm here if you want to talk."

Keeley waited till she was out of the room before checking the phone. Twenty-one texts. It was a good thing she had unlimited messages.

56 bottles of beer on the wall, 56 bottlesof beer. Take one down, pass it around,55 bottles of beer on the wall.

Don't you have teammates you can go bother?

You know most girls would die for the chance to text with me.

Then go annoy them.

I can't. You have my phone, remember? I'm starting to think you have some serious memory issues.

> My only issue is you. Since we're stuck with each other, I think we need to promise we'll forward each other texts and missed calls.

I already offered and you turned me down.

She scrolled through their texts. Crap. He was right. She'd been so upset about Zach that she blew him off when he suggested it.

I'm agreeing now.

You snooze, you lose, baby doll. Looks like I'm the one holding all the cards.

That's where he was wrong. He controlled her phone, but she controlled his.

If you don't forward all my texts, I won't forward yours.

That's fine.

Wait. What?

You don't care?

Already told my parents we'd have spotty reception so we're communicating via email.

But ... what about his friends? Then again, if he was anything like Zach, most of his friends were on the team. Damn it. Now what? She refused to beg.

Guess you'll have to think of another way to get me to agree. Flattery will get you everywhere.

As if she would add to his ego. She'd rather eat dirt.

I am not that desperate and you're not that lucky.

I think you just threw down a challenge.

Game on, Keeley. Game on.

The taunt left her angry. They were in this mess together. He should be helping instead of using her phone as leverage.

She needed to get out for a while. She thought about asking Nicky to the movies, but remembered she was in class. Instead she sent her two long voice mails, venting about Talon and Zach. Then she took Tucker to the park. Not that it made her feel any better. She had no solution about Talon, Zach was still mad at her, and she hadn't finished a single summer assignment. All in all, a crappy day.

That night she was in her room rereading one of her favorite books when she heard her brother. She rushed to the hallway, but he brushed past her and slammed the door to his room. Enough was enough. She'd never gone to bed angry at him, and she wasn't about to start now.

When she went in, Zach was on his bed, scribbling on a pad of paper. Diving right in, Keeley said, "Zach, I'm sorry about last night. I know you're mad, but I didn't miss your calls on purpose." There was a small hesitation in his writing so she took it as a good sign. "I guess you're working on the plays for tomorrow's scrimmage. Always Mr. Prepared," she joked, peeking at the paper. He angled away so she couldn't see. "Okay. Um, do you think you can drop me off at the library tomorrow on the way to your game?"

"It's not exactly on the way," he pointed out.

She was trying to be nice and he couldn't bother to do the same? "You really going to keep this up?"

"Keep what up?"

"Zach, I didn't get those calls last night. If I did, I would have picked you up. You know that."

He thrust his chin out. "I wasn't planning on drinking last night, but I did. And I thought it was okay because you promised you'd drive me home. You didn't. End of story."

She understood why he was upset, but he was acting like it was all her fault. "I'm sorry I missed your calls, and it sucks that you got grounded, but you chose to drive. No one forced you."

"Whatever. I need to finish this." He went back to his notepad.

She stood there awkwardly, staring at his back. "Okay, well ... good night, Zach."

His silence followed her back to her room.









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