

# **L.A. SUMMER**

*Friends 'Til the Blood End*

*BOOK 1*

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**WANASOMA BOOKS**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Thanks, always, to God for boundless possibilities and blessings.

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To my readers, simply put, thank you!

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# PROLOGUE

September, 4

6:30 PM

Back to school. Boone High was different, the people too—maybe because I'm different after my summer in L.A., for better or worse. I don't mind being back, one iota.

Except for AP classes. Homework is murder! I have one easy assignment. For World Lit I have to write a three-page paper describing my summer, and what I learned, if anything. I learned so much I could write twenty pages!

I learned about "holdin' mine," which means to stand up for myself, or "catch fade" if I don't, which means to fight. And there were times when holdin' mine took courage that I didn't think I had at all.

I learned how to "roll," which means to skate. I thought I would die if I didn't go to the rink every Saturday night to hook up with Dominick, a boy I'll never forget, but wish I could.

I learned about love—it's not worth the emotion.

I learned about friendship—the true meaning of it.

And OMG I learned about BOYZ! Things I wished I hadn't, and one thing I wouldn't dare mention in my paper! If my parents find out, they'll ban me for life from visiting Stacy again!

Overall, I can sum up my summer in three words...Wild! Crazy! Fun!

Until next time,

Me



# WOMAN OF THE HOUSE

❧ *Stacy* ❧

I open my eyes to the summer sun, hop out of bed and scream, “Dad! Let’s go! Mikki’s here!” No answer. “Dad!” I yell again.

In the middle of the hallway I notice the house is too quiet. I don’t hear the TV playing in Everett’s bedroom, or the big screen in the living room that’s usually on when Everett’s playing his game. Everett’s my twelve-year-old brother by the way. His highlight of the summer is eating a Big & Tasty burger, playing his Xbox, and watching TV—all at the same time. Throw in super-size fries and Everett’s living the life.

If you ask me, Everett uses food to cope. I like hanging with the homies, choppin’ it up on the phone, you know, not wasting time thinking too much. But basically, Everett and me both had to cope after my moms and dad called it quits. This happened three years ago. But really years before, so I don’t have a home with two parents. I live between homes. Mostly though, I live with my dad. I chose to live with him for reasons that I don’t like to talk about. But I will tell you, if I had moved in with moms, I’d be stuck with Everett at her house during the week, alternating weekends and holidays,

half the summer, going to weak Carson High instead of Dorsey, and having to share a room with my stepsister, Chalice, who I hellas hate!

I walk into the kitchen and find my dad cooking me up a stack of pancakes with a pile of bacon and eggs on the side. On special occasions, like Mikki coming to town, he likes to surprise me with my favorite breakfast.

*LOL! That's a joke!*

Nothing's cooking on the stove, and nobody's in here. This ain't Run's House. We don't eat together or have family discussions around the table. We rarely see each other when we eat. If we're not eating fast food, we fix whatever's in the kitchen and make our way to our corners. I prefer my room with the phone to my ear. Everett prefers any room with a TV. My dad prefers his room watching Cops, or any other crime show.

I hate to reminisce on how things used to be, but when moms lived here I woke up to something smelling good. Our kitchen was even decorated pretty with raspberry-colored curtains, ceramic strawberry canisters, strawberry throw rugs, plants hanging from the ceiling, and straw baskets tacked on the wall. The baskets, now dusty and old, are all that's left of moms in this kitchen. My dad's girlfriends, the ones who try to move in on us, have "redecorated" the kitchen until everything is mismatched.

"Dad!" I scream at the top of my lungs. *Where'd everybody go?* From the kitchen I head into my dad's pimp-size room converted from the garage. Moms called it their "private get-away." She had a big Jacuzzi tub installed in the bathroom, and ordered up furniture that could pass for Queen Latifah's, or some other queen. Now it's a spot where my dad sneaks in

his girlfriends, the wham-bam-thank-you-ma'ams that he doesn't care for me to meet. I'm up on the game and that's cool. I'm not down for meeting half the women my dad brings home. His last girlfriend, Regina, seriously tried to move in and take over.

*Ain't gonna happen!*

My dad's gone, his TV is off and the forty-pound dumbbells he lifts every morning to stay cut almost break my baby toe. "OW!" I hop around screaming. With my brain fully awake, I realize where everybody went—to pick up Mikki from the airport WITHOUT ME! That's jacked up!

In case you're wondering, Mikki's my old best friend. We were ten the last time we saw each other. We're both sixteen now. Her real name is Michelle Mitchell—we call her Mikki for short. Before she moved to Texas, she lived across the street from me, and wore pink cat-eye Mickey Mouse glasses, you know, the kind gumps wear. *LOL!* No, I'm playin'. Mikki wasn't a gump, and she hated wearing those glasses. Kids used to clown her, about everything when I think about it. Me, I didn't care that Mikki was, you know, *different*. She was the best friend I could have, and the nicest person I've ever known. On the one-hundred.

When Mikki first moved to Boone, Texas, we talked on the phone like every single week. That got old. We wrote each other letters. That got old too. I grew out of writing letters and got into MySpace. *SexyStacyD*, that's me. Mikki wasn't allowed to have MySpace. Eventually, the phone calls and the letters stopped. We've talked maybe one or two times over the last few years. Then out of nowhere Mikki hits me up, saying her parents might let her visit me this summer, if her dad talked to my dad, and this and that. I was hyped! We talked like time and distance didn't exist.

The first thing I did was start planning where we would go and what we would do. Mikki couldn't have come on a better day. Saturday night at the rink is *the spot*. But since we can't get to the rink without a car, I'll have to bum a ride from my dad. And listen to him complain up and back, saying he can't wait until I can drive myself around. I can't wait either! Carlette got a new PT Cruiser for Christmas and already has her intermediate "L." I'm still on foot patrol, which means Mikki and me won't get far without Carlette, who's always on punishment!

After all the time that's passed, I wonder if best friends still applies to Mikki and me. I'll be real with yaw. We don't have much in common anymore. For one, school is *not* my favorite subject and that's all Mikki talked about—her GPA and how she became a member of "who's something" in America. And get this, yaw. She belongs to the Future Scientists of America Club! *Are you serious?*

Hyped about seeing Mikki anyway, I rush back to my room, find my mauve-colored cell hiding in my rainbow Nike Dunks, and dial up Carlette, my new best friend.