

A Portrait of Sandra Dee

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It wasn't like Hayley had taken the photo herself.

She wasn't the sort of person to take sneaky photos on her phone. She was nice, everyone said so. OK, maybe not everyone. Everyone who counted said Hayley was nice. She wasn't a bully, or any of those other words that had been thrown around in the media. Hayley had just forwarded the photo to one person. She hadn't done anything wrong. Anyone else would have done the same.

When Hayley first noticed the photo on her phone, she'd laughed out loud.

'Check out this photo of Madison,' she'd said to Jojo. 'She doesn't look so classy now, does she? Not with her knees that far apart and her whatsit showing.'
Jojo flinched. 'Who took it?'

'Dunno. Probably the same person who took this photo.' Hayley swiped the screen and giggled. 'It's obviously a guy. Or it's a disgusting looking sausage.'

'Ew,' Jojo said. 'Some things should never see the light of day: Gross.'

'I know, right?'

Jojo wrinkled her nose. 'That makes me want another beer. Want one?'

Hayley wondered if she should have another drink. Her stomach lurched. Perhaps not, she thought. She didn't want to puke, or worse, end up like Madison.

'Nah,' Hayley said. 'I'm good.'

Madison lay sprawled on the floor. She had drool on her chin and chips in her hair. Chips. Hayley's mouth watered. She'd love some chips right now. She wondered where Madison had gotten her hair-chips from, or if someone had just dropped them there.

Jojo filled a plastic cup, and set it on the table. She wagged her finger at Madison's sleeping form. 'I told you not to drink so much, you idiot.'

'Serves her right for not listening,' Hayley said. 'Should we wake her up?'

'Nah. Maybe later,' Jojo said. 'She'd be totally grounded if her parents saw her like that.'

'Totally,' Hayley said. 'They would freak.'

Jojo turned to the boy whose house the party was at. Zac White, captain of the First Fifteen; Danny in the school production of *Grease*; parents on holiday abroad.

'Zac, do you have a blanket for Madison?' Jojo said. 'She's shivering.'

Zac swayed on the spot. 'No.'

'What?'

Zac leaned against the wall. 'Blankets live on beds.'

Hayley threw back her head and laughed. Zac was so funny.

Jojo put her hands on her hips. 'You're useless. I'll go find a blanket myself.'

Jojo stalked out of the room. Hayley rolled her eyes. Coming to the party with Jojo was a mistake. Hopefully Zac would know that Hayley wasn't like Jojo or Madison; she was good for a laugh, the sort of girl who could chug a jug while looking cute.

On the floor, Madison snorted in her sleep.

'Hey, you.' Zac slid up to Hayley. She inhaled sharply. She'd gone to see *Grease* twice just to watch him on stage. It was a shame it also meant watching Madison mangle the role of Sandy.

Zac raised one eyebrow. 'What are you looking at?'

Hayley showed him the photo of Madison.

Zac grinned. 'Nice. Not a sweet-as-pie Sandra Dee now, is she? That's what she should have given Danny on the backseat of Greased Lightning.'

Hayley laughed again. God, Zac was funny. She tried to think of something witty to say about Greased Lightning, but all she could think about was Zac's hips as he gyrated around Madison on stage.

'Can I have a copy of the photo?' Zac said.

'Sure, I'll send it to you. What's your username?'

He told her. Finally! She'd been dying to get Zac's username ever since forever. He didn't give it to just anyone, only girls he wanted to hook up with. She thumbed his username into her phone and pressed send.

Hayley leaned in and tried to meet Zac's eye. He was too busy tapping on his mobile to notice. Never mind, she could smell his deodorant when he was this close. She sighed. The evening had just got so much better.

'It's a pretty funny photo,' Hayley said. 'Want to see another one?' Hayley flicked to the second photo that had been taken on her phone, the one of someone's appendage.

'Classic,' Zac said. 'Can you send that one to me too?'

'Sure.'

Zac scuttled away, phone clasped to his chest. Hayley looked around. Who could she talk to now? She didn't want to look like a no-mates. Where was Jojo?

Hayley stepped over Madison to retrieve the beer Jojo had poured earlier. The drink slurped over the rim and ran over her fingers. Where had Zac gone? Would she look like a total loser if she tried to find him? At least she had his username now. Madison would be so jealous when she woke up. Hayley looked down. Madison had rolled onto her side and started snoring. Madison should never have gotten so wasted. She'd been asking for it doing those shots. Now she was embarrassing herself by snoring in front of everyone. Hayley steadied herself against a table, and drained her cup.

Madison cornered Jojo and Hayley at lunchtime, tears streaming down her face.

'The photo is online,' Madison said, sinking onto the nearest bench. Jojo put her arm around Madison's shaking shoulders.

'It's on that website, you know, that one with the ratings?' Jojo and Hayley met each other's eyes. Of course they knew about that website. Everyone did.

Madison wiped her eyes. 'Who took the photo? Why did you let them?'

Hayley opened her mouth and then closed it again. She didn't know if Madison had found out the photo had been taken on her phone or not, and didn't want to be the one to tell her.

'I heard it was Will,' Jojo said. 'He took one of himself too, remember. He was talking in maths about how he snuck the phone and how funny it was. All the boys were looking at the photo of him and laughing.'

'My parents are going to ground me,' Madison said. 'I'll never get into law school. When the university does an internet search for me, all they'll see is my big, fat, ugly thighs, as well as my ...'

Madison put her head in her hands. 'Did you know that they called me Pork Chop? They said I'm so ugly I might break the internet? Oh my God, I am so repulsive.'

'Don't look at the comments,' Jojo said. 'Just try and forget about it.'

'I can't,' Madison said. 'How can you just forget?'

'You just don't think about it,' Hayley said. 'This is just what happens sometimes. It's just what guys do. That's why in *Grease* Frenchy says men are like the fleas on rats.'

Jojo rolled her eyes. 'That's so not true. It's so not normal. Only creeps do things like that.'

'I don't care if it's normal, all I care is that they did it to me,' Madison said, tears cascading down her face. 'I'm a stupid, disgusting, fat blob.'

Jojo pulled Madison into a tight embrace. 'No, you're not.'

'I am,' Madison said, voice muffled against Jojo's chest. 'I even disgust myself. I'm a stupid, slutty pork chop.'

'No you're not,' Jojo said again.
'I am,' Madison shuddered. 'I am.'

Hayley was sitting by herself at lunchtime, checking her phone. Jojo wasn't speaking to her any more. She'd become even more uptight since Madison had done what she'd done. Jojo said it was all their fault and that Hayley should go to the cops and tell them who the photo had been sent to. As if Hayley would do that, she wouldn't do that. Besides, he probably wasn't the person who put the photo online. He wouldn't have done something like that.

Hayley stifled a sob. It was Madison's fault. It was. Hayley hadn't done anything wrong.

'Hey, you.'

Hayley looked up. Zac was smiling down at her. She sat up straight. Zac White. He'd never actually spoken to her at school before. She needed to act cool.

'Oh. Hi.'

Zac sat down beside her. 'Sorry about your friend. She was one awesome Sandy.'

Hayley's eyes watered. 'Thanks.'

Zac cleared his throat. 'I was wondering. Have you still got the photos on your phone?'

'Yeah,' Hayley said. 'Why?'

'Just wondering,' Zac said. 'Maybe you should delete them, is all.'

Hayley's eyes dropped to the white phone in her hands. It was covered in smiley face stickers and had 'Hayley' written on it in faux diamante.

'OK,' Hayley said. 'I will.'
'Thanks.' Zac stood up and patted Hayley on the head. 'You're one cool chick, Hayley.'

Zac walked away. Hayley turned back to her phone. First, she looked at the photo she now knew to be of Will. Ugh. It was still gross. She couldn't believe that the guys thought Will should be given a special award for stealthiest shot of the year. Honestly.

She then looked at the photo of Madison. It was the first time she'd seen it since the party. Hayley pinched the bridge of her nose. It wasn't funny any more. Maybe she shouldn't have forwarded it to Zac. It wasn't her fault what had happened, but maybe she should have just deleted it when she'd found it in the first place. Hayley thought about Madison's coffin being lowered into the ground and Madison's mum Barb keeling over beside the grave, Brian deathly pale. Madison's aunt standing behind all the other mourners, crying silently. Hayley wondered if Madison's parents had seen the photo of their daughter with chips in her hair and drool running down her chin. Probably not, but who knew what people would look up online. Hayley always looked at things she shouldn't, especially when everyone else was asleep.

Hayley pressed the delete button. The photo of Madison disappeared instantly, and was quickly replaced by a photo of a cat Hayley had taken the day after the party. Hayley held her finger on the delete button for too long; the photo of the cat disappeared as well. Hayley pressed her finger even harder on the screen, her forefinger shuddered under the pressure and her knuckle creaked. Delete. Delete. Delete. She pulled her finger away, and thrust her phone into her school bag, burying it deep

underneath her books. Stupid phone. Hayley never wanted to see it again. Later, when she got home from school, she'd find a hammer and smash it.

She watched Zac cross the far side of the courtyard. You're a cool chick Hayley, he'd said.

She was. She was a cool chick.

This was all Madison's fault. Like how last year, when a photo of Hayley had been put on that same website, it was Hayley's own fault. She shouldn't have chugged too many jugs and she shouldn't have gone behind the garden shed with the boys. Sure, she felt disgusting afterwards, but life is like that, right? The trick was not to think about it too much. The other tricks were to wear jeans and to avoid looking in mirrors. Hayley should never have worn a short dress that night, it was like leaving your handbag on the front seat of a car, and everyone said so. There was no need to get all melodramatic about it. It didn't ruin Hayley's life, apart from missing the audition for *Grease* when she was in hospital. Hayley sniffed. She would have made a great Sandy. She would have been much better than Madison. Hayley sang one of Sandy's songs under her breath. She imagined herself on stage with Zac, just like she'd been doing the night of the party when she'd seen Will pick up her phone and point it in Madison's direction. It's not like Hayley had taken the photo herself, but she hadn't done anything to stop it either. It was Madison's fault, though. Madison should have never put herself in that position in the first place.

Hayley dug her phone back out of her bag. She couldn't keep it buried in there. Someone might message her. Someone might post something online that everyone would be talking about all

afternoon, and Hayley would look like a no-mates if she didn't read about it when everybody else did.

She wrapped her fingers around her phone, stood up, and followed Zac into the distance.