



CHAPTER 1

FORBIDDEN LOVE

Jaz

‘Hey, gorgeous!’ Dex ran down the road. He dropped his bag at my feet. He slung his arm across my shoulder then pulled me towards him. Usually I love it when he kisses me, but today I didn’t feel well. I pulled back. ‘What’s up?’ He looked worried. ‘You’re not dumping me, are you?’

‘No way!’ I smiled. ‘I’ve got a headache, that’s all.’ I didn’t tell him that I felt a bit sick as well. That would have been way too much information.

Dex and I have been together since last year. I go to the girls' school and Dex goes to the boys' school down the road. The only time the two schools meet is for the school play. Last year we put on *Chicago*. Because I'm good at textiles, I did the costumes. Dex played the lead part of Billy Flynn, the lawyer. He looked so buff in his suit and tie. And his voice is amazing. All the girls fancied him. So I couldn't believe it when he started talking to *me*.

Every time he came for a fitting, I'd go all hot. And my words would come out all wrong. He must have thought I was an idiot. Then, during the dress rehearsal, he split his jacket. I had to quickly sew it up in between scenes.

'You're a lifesaver, Jaz,' he said. He gave me the most amazing smile. I thought I would explode, I went so red.

After the final curtain call he came backstage. 'Some of us are going up the High Street. Do

you want to come?’ he asked. ‘We’re going to the Shake Shack.’

Did I want to come? YES! Of course I wanted to go to the Shake Shack with Dex and the crew. There was one big problem though: my mum and dad.

My parents are great – as parents go. But they are uber strict. I’ve got an older sister, Suki. She’s way older than me. She’s 25 now but she had a baby when she was my age. Ever since then, Mum and Dad have been on my case. ‘You are going to an all-girls school, Jasmine.’ ‘You will not have a boyfriend till you leave school, Jasmine.’ ‘We will vet all your friends, Jasmine.’ I mean – give me a break. I’m 16! All my mates have boyfriends.

So I really wanted to say yes to Dex, but I knew Mum and Dad would go mad.

‘Sorry,’ I said, ‘I have to go home.’

‘Can I walk you home, then?’ Dex asked.

I could not believe my ears. Dexter Hooper wanted to walk me home!

‘That would be great....’

‘Cool! I’ll get my coat.’

‘But....’ I went on.

‘Aw, jeez! There’s always a “but,”’ Dex said. ‘Go on. Tell me I’m too late. Some other guy’s got there first.’

I giggled. ‘No – it’s my olds. They’ve banned boys till I’m old enough to vote.’

Dex smiled. ‘Are you for real?’ I nodded, sadly. ‘No probs,’ he said, ‘I’ll just have to meet you from school.’

And that was how it started. Jaz and Dex – Year 11’s hottest couple. I still can’t believe it.

But today I felt really rough. As gorgeous as Dex is, I just wanted to rest my head on his shoulder.

I couldn't even think of kissing him. I even felt dizzy looking up at him.

'Hey, what's wrong? You look like a zombie,' he laughed.

'Cheers!' I tried to return his smile. 'It's this pain. It feels as if someone's hitting my head with a sledgehammer. Mum thinks I might need glasses.'

Dex made a growling sound. 'Sexy! I like a girl in glasses.'

I tapped his arm. 'Stop it. I mean it – I might have to wear them.'

'And I mean it. I didn't think you could be any more beautiful, but I think glasses will be the icing on the cake.'

We walked up the road slowly. He had his arm over my shoulder. I was resting my head on his chest and he was stroking my forehead. Suddenly, there was a screech of brakes. A car stopped next to us. I didn't take any notice at first. Then....

‘Jasmine! Get in the car this minute!’

It was Dad. And he was not happy. He ran over to me and grabbed my arm. He was pulling me into the car but my head was throbbing.

‘Dad, stop it. Stop it!’ I shouted. ‘You’re hurting me.’

Dex ran over to the car but Dad turned on him. ‘Get off her! If I ever see you near her again, I’ll kill you. Do you hear me?’

I started crying. Dad pushed me into the car and drove off. I didn’t see Dex again for four months.