

A Little Less Molly Ringwald

Daniela Lieggi

"Remind me again, why I can't stay in public school?"

My mother didn't look up as she continued to arrange her makeup on the vanity; nail polish by height and eye shadow by color. I remembered days from I was young and nothing seemed more soothing than watching her rearrange all of her cosmetics. To me she always seemed like a princess; with her mountains of cheap, off the counter makeup, jewelry and purses from street venders, and clothes from the chic stores in SoHo. Since my dad had got into the PR firm, representing action-star Dante Cosimo, that had changed. She'd started special ordering her make-up, only buying her jewelry from Tiffany's, and all the clothes in her closet were from Coco Chanel or Valentino's. She seemed to take an eternity before answered and sickly I wondered if she did it on purpose.

"Westcliff Academy is an excellent school."

"If you're a self absorbed, drug addicted rich kid it is." I muttered under my breath.

"Gillian!"

"What?" I snapped, plastering a bland innocent face.

"Several of your father's client's children go to that school." She gave me the parental "I'm so disappointed in you" look. These days it seemed like a regular feature in my life.

"Mom, I really don't want to go there." I decided to try pleading again.

"It will look much better on your transcripts then some inner city school." She said.

"When is dad coming home?"

"I don't know baby." Her eyes never left her makeup.

"Figures." I flounced out of her room.

I could practically feel her head shaking at me as I went back to my room. I stepped over boxes, careful not to stub my toes; unlike the other bazillion times I'd done so. Yup, we were moving. According to my dad no one lived in a Brown Stone apartment when you represented the stars. You either owned the entire Brown Stone and converted

it into a mansion or you did what my parents were doing. You moved into Manhattan. Not that I would be enjoying the new view. It would be a change from waking up and seeing the pigeon lady outside my window to some blonde housewife walking three terriers and a chihuahua. Apparently at the end of this month, a whole week away, I would be shipped off to a school where lobotomies were probably an admission requirement.

As I stalked into my room, I wasn't surprised to see my little brother, Dylan, stretched out on my bed. He was leafing angrily through my diary. It was his curse to have a sister who never wrote or even had anything remotely interesting or juicy to record in a diary.

"Man, your life is boring." He looked at me like this was a personal affront to him; his inability to tease me.

"Thanks," I said dryly, "Now get out."

"Or what?" Dylan sat up, finally looking interested. My eyes narrowed.

I didn't bother responding, at least not verbally. Mom usually went for the ears, but I always found the hair to be more effective.

"Get offa me," he grunted as I pulled him off my bed by the hair of his scalp and towards the door. Pushing him into the hallway, I closed the door in his face, locking it. "Goodnight, loser." I yelled through the door and smiled in satisfaction as he rattled the doorknob, uselessly.

I walked over to my computer. I had an email waiting for me from my friend, Emily Wharton.

From: blondz_r_mo_fun@hotmail.com

To: gillybean@gmail.com

Subject: OMG!

Michael asked me out!!

We're going to Izzy's next Saturday. Can u believe it!? U have to come!!

-E

P.S. Has your mom repented? Please say yes, otherwise next year will totally suck.

Emily had been crushing on Michael since freshman year. Over the course of last two years we'd worked together on her ability to do more than turn oxygen into carbon dioxide in his presence. If there was a high school equivalent to having Orlando Bloom ask you to marry him, it was being asked out by Michael Grisham, star of our soccer team and the most beautiful guy in school.

From: gillybean@gmail.com

To: blondz_r_mo_fun@hotmail.com

Subject: Re OMG!

Congrats! And no. I am still all set to go to kiss my ass academy. And I wouldn't miss it for the world. Love ya!

:(

-G

On the bright side, there was always the chance I could get expelled, right? I was starting to miss Dylan already.

I Wish I Had More than a Rabbit in My Hat

The weeks leading up to my deportation went by fast. Emily and me exchanged our own teary goodbye and promised to email each other everyday. (Emily's mother didn't trust her with a cell phone) My dad was already at work the morning I was leaving for Westcliff and my mom had made lunch plans. I would be traveling solo.

I guess my mom felt guilty toward the end because she bought me a brand new I-Pod for the trip. It was tiny and my favorite color; light aquamarine blue. And boy did it come in handy. The drive from New York City to upstate New Hampshire wasn't short. Unfortunately, the bus was packed. I was sandwiched between a guy about my age and a little old lady who smelled like peppermint and Aloe Vera hand lotion. The guy's face was pasty and glued to his PSP. As much as I didn't want to be there, I started to pray to see the gates of Westcliff. A whole five hours later I was there. By the time the bus reached (I kid you not) Effington, New Hampshire, most of the passengers had already gotten off and I was able to stretch across the two seats once occupied by paste boy and peppermint lady. I woke up to someone poking me.

"Go away," I swatted uselessly at the offending hand.

"I could, but I think Phil wants to go home." An amused male voice hovered over me.

I sat up and slowly opened my eyes. "Who's Phil?"

"The driver."

I wasn't prepared for what I saw. Michael might have been the best looking guy at Barrington Prep High School but he couldn't hold a candle to the one before me now. His

hair was a perfect shade of blonde, not bleached or sandy, just blonde and his eyes were blue, boring into me like sapphires. Not to mention, he was tall. As this god stood over me I flashed back to the 6th grade when my English teacher forced a unit of Greek Mythology down our throats. Given where I was, I couldn't decide if god boy as an Apollo or a Narcissus. I looked around but the bus was completely empty minus him and me.

"Shit," I muttered, springing up and grabbing my suitcase from over head. Typical Gilly style I almost decapitated god boy with it.

"I'm sorry," I said, mortified.

He shrugged as if deranged girls tried to give him a concussion with their luggage every day.

"You're new, right?"

I frowned, "How did you know?"

"I know everyone here," he said, not the least bit arrogantly.

Yup, definitely a Narcissus.

I rolled my eyes and dragged my stuff behind me. The driver gave me a funny look as I passed him but I kept my eyes trained on the ground. I jumped from the last step of the bus to what would become my rabbit hole. Cold air rushed up to greet me, momentarily cutting off my breath.

My acceptance letter said I'd be in Bathory Hall, which was on the east side of campus. I turned around, smacking into God boy again.

"What are you still doing here?" I grumbled, exhaustion taking over for awe.

He merely smiled at my rudeness as if it were cute, "Do you even know where you're going?"

"Bathory Hall." When I said this, a funny look came across his face. I couldn't help but feel a certain amount of sick satisfaction at being able to ruffle his feathers, even if it hadn't been intentional.

He shook his head, "Are you sure? They don't usually put...transfers there."

There was something compelling about his voice that made me almost check the paper in my bag but I squelched the impulse.

I was getting tired and there was something about him that I didn't trust.

"I guess they made an exception." I said, picking my bag back up.

He left me alone but I swear I could feel him staring holes into the back of my head as I walked away, but when I turned around he wasn't there and neither was the bus. I kicked leaves out of my path, grateful for the map that had come in the mail. I knew I was being paranoid but every foot or so I would look behind me, expecting to see him instead of the cobbled pathways and trees.

I felt like Belle in Beauty and the Beast as I stopped in front of my dorm. It was = a miniature of a full blown, mount a siege, hang the damsel from the battlements, castle.

"I really hate you, mom," I muttered under my breath as I pushed the door open, preparing a breath. Then just as quickly let it out. No one was there.

After seeing the front, the décor was what I had expected. Chippendale furniture dominated all the rooms and the walls were covered in portraits of people who could have been Pride & Prejudice stand ins. My room was easy enough to find. A bubble of excitement built up in me as I opened the door and turned the light on. The boxes full of my stuff that we'd mailed ahead were there...and they were open.

"You've got to be shitting me," I muttered, kneeling before the first. I dug through the boxes, tossing my things behind me in my haste. Nothing was missing. But now I knew something about my roommate. She was nosy if not a kleptomaniac. My roommate's side of the room was pink. Not hot pink but baby pink. Great, it looked like I was going to be rooming with Private I Barbie.

I wasn't really in the mood to unpack so after I got the sheets on my bed I settled for a hot shower and my new computer. Like the other dorms, Bathory Hall was hooked up for wireless use. So once the computer was on, I was free to check email. I already had one from Emily.

From: blondz_r_mo_fun@hotmail.com

To: gillybean@gmail.com

Subject: How r u?

Are you there yet?!?!

You have to tell me all about it. What is your room like? Are the boys hawt!?

-E

P.S. Michael wants to know if all the girls in your dorm shower together. I told him no but he refuses to believe me.

>.<

From: gillybean@gmail.com

To: blondz_r_mo_fun@hotmail.com

Subject: re How r u?

Yes, I am here. I think my roommate went through my stuff! I haven't seen anybody yet.

And you can tell Michael that just I took a shower and it was alone.

Luv ya!

-G

Somehow I felt weird lying to Emily about god boy. We'd shared everything as children but for some reason I wanted to keep this to myself; at least for now.

My roommate wasn't in by the time I went to sleep but she was there when I woke up. However, all I could see of her was a bob of blonde hair. I'd set my alarm clock for 7:00, not wanting to be late for orientation, and it went off right on schedule.

My roommate turned over, glaring at me. "Would you shut that frigging thing off?"

I hit the switch before Dawn of the Dead Barbie decided to get up and skewer me. Grabbing my robe and shampoo, I went into the hallway. There were several girls running around in a mixture of towels, underwear, and full dress. I felt like a bee that had just flown into the wrong hive.

There were three bathrooms on the floor at the end of the hall that we all shared.

"Oof." Someone pushed into me in their efforts to get into their room. A red headed girl swung around.

"I'm sorry," she said. She looked like she was waiting for me to bite her, or at least yell at her. She reminded me a children's book I used to own about King Arthur. With her pale skin and wavy red hair she was a shoe in for Lady Guinevere.

"Don't worry about it." I gave her what I hoped to be a reassuring smile. "I'm Gilly."

"Gwen."

"Fascinating. Now if you two lesbians are done checking each other out, can you move so I can get to the bathrooms?" Elizabeth stood in our doorway, glaring at me.

I watched as the freckles on Gwen's face became more pronounced with her blush. Wordlessly the two of us moved apart.

"See ya," she said, disappearing down the hall.

I came back into the room from taking my own shower, which had been brief. (Some one had flushed the toilet on me.) My room mate was still there. She was in front of her mirror, adding blush to her cheeks. For a moment I was eerily reminded of my mom.

Trying at one last truce, I smiled at her. "I'm Gilly."

"Elizabeth Pembroke." She looked at me for a second as if I should recognize her name. "As in Pembroke and Brady..."

I continued to give her a blank look.

[Some comment that suggests she is green or common]

"Do we wear our uniform to orientation?"

There was a pause before she answered.

"Ew, no." She looked at me as if I'd asked her if Dulce & Gabanna was a brand of candy.

That answered, I went for comfort instead of style. I wore a pair of jeans and a well loved (used) concert t-shirt, which was one or two sizes too big, I'd gotten from Halapoloosa when I'd visited my cousin Nathan in Chicago a few summers ago.

I found the main building easily enough...and froze. The courtyard was a circus of blue cardigans and plaid skirts. I felt like laughing and crying at the same time.

That bitch.

Amid the stares, I got into line for my ID. When I reached the start, an unsmiling woman hollered.

"Name and year?"

"Cole, junior."

Her frown deepened, "Where's your uniform?"

"I didn't know we had to wear it."

She made a "harrumph" sound but didn't question me further.

She looked through a stack of envelopes and then handed me a laminated plastic card. I grimaced, the picture on my ID was from the photograph I'd been asked to submit with

my application. Grouchy gave me my class schedule and I moved on or into someone, depending on how you wanted to look at it.

"Hey! I was wondering when I'd see you again."

Just what I needed. God boy.

"So, what classes do you have?"

Before I could respond, he had grabbed the piece of paper from grasp and was reading it.

A little belatedly, I yelled. "Hey!" I tried uselessly to grab back my schedule but me being 5'3, I was at a distinct disadvantage. His face scrunched as he read over it, either he needed glasses or he was trying to commit the damn thing to memory. After a while, he let me reclaim my schedule. I was about to give me a major dressing down when he smiled and I couldn't. In a way he was like my old cat Nikki, (whose main source of entertainment had been swiping the goldfish out of my little brother's tank and batting them around the floor of the apartment) completely bad, but too cute to actually get mad at.

"Hey lezbo!"

I groaned, the roommate from hell had caught up with me.

I turned around in time to see Elizabeth Pembroke along with three other girls I didn't know walking up to us. However, I didn't get the impression that Elizabeth was the "leader." The other girls seemed to gravitate around another girl. She, like Elizabeth, was blonde but where as Elizabeth's was honey blonde, medium length, and curly, this girl had signature bleach blonde princess tresses that fell down her back. There was something unsettling about her gaze as it fell on me. She came to a stop in front of me, smiling in a knowing way that right away put me on edge.

"So, you're the new girl."

She looked at god boy and her expression changed, becoming more warm, "Tristan."

"Hey, sis."

Shades of Blonde

My mouth must have been hanging open, because Elizabeth smiled at me snidely.

"Trying to catch flies?"

God boy's, I mean Tristan's sister, turned a disapproving look on Elizabeth who immediately sobered.

"Don't mind her. She has tourettes." I watched as Elizabeth's pasty face turned bright red.

"I'm Daniela." She held out her hand.

Hesitantly, I took it. As I looked into the dark pools of her eyes I knew she had the power to destroy me. My hand was sweaty as it went back to my side.

She seemed to finally realize what I was wearing and frowned.