

zoey Dean's
STAR POWER

CHAPTER one

emily

◀ Wednesday September 23 ▶

12:45 PM Check out of school

1 PM Power lunch at Ford's Filling Station

2 PM Arrive at Sony lot

2:30 PM Meet with director

“Okay, my future star we’re almost done!” Mackenzie Little-Armstrong whipped around from the front seat of the silver Prius to face Emily Mungler. “Just a few more Hollywood rules.”

Emily nervously twirled her cinnamon brown hair around her index finger. She was scrunched in the back seat between her two other best friends in Los Angeles, Cordelia Kingsley (aka Coco) and Evangelina Becks (aka Becks), on the way to rehearsals for her new movie, *Deal With It*. Mac was teaching her the cardinal rules of making it in Tinseltown, which were turning out to be more complicated than Lindsay Lohan’s love life.

“Okay. Last one: Hollywood is very clique-y. It’s like BAMS,” she added, referring to their junior high, Bel-Air Middle School, “but with waaaaay more ego.”

“So true.” Mac’s assistant, Erin, who was driving them across town, nodded in agreement. Erin was twenty-seven, and she had green eyes and extraordi-

narily pale skin. Technically, Erin worked as one of four assistants to Mac's mother, Adrienne Little-Armstrong, the most powerful agent in Hollywood. But the reality was that Erin spent most of her days schlepping around Mac and her entourage.

"Let's review one more time," Mac said, twisting her waist-length blond hair into a knot. "What does everyone love?" she quizzed.

"Confidence," Emily shot back. "Even if I have to fake it."

"Great." Mac looked down at her iPhone and read from her notes. "What's the rule on hanging out with extras?"

"I can't be too friendly, or my star power will go down." Emily winced. Mac's rules were a tad snobby.

"Perfection!" Mac cooed. "When can you gossip?"

"Never?" Emily asked, even though she hadn't meant it as a question.

"Trick question." Mac tilted the rearview mirror to make eye contact with Emily. "Never gossip *unless* you need information. Then you give a little to get a little. You just have to be *strategic*."

Emily's heartbeat quickened. She was an actress, not a spy. Besides, nothing she'd done here in Hollywood had been strategic. It had all happened by accident a month ago, when Mac discovered Emily at a premiere party. Back then she was just Emily Mungler, from Cedartown, Iowa. Now she was Emily *Skylar*—Mac, her

agent and best friend, had assigned her a catchier stage name—and she lived with Mac in Bel-Air, one of the ritziest neighborhoods in the world.

“Just remember.” Mac turned to face her, her lightly freckled face stern and her light blue eyes serious. “When you step on set, you’re entering a no-trust zone. Kimmie Tachman is live-blogging her experience as an assistant ‘producer.’” Mac made air quotes around the word *producer* because everyone knew that Kimmie’s dad, who was actually producing *Deal With It*, had just given her the title so she’d see her name at the end of the credits. “Just because she goes to BAMS with us does not mean she’s safe. In fact, quite the opposite.”

Emily nodded and thought about how her mom, Lori, would tell her to “just enjoy the now.” Her mother was always reading self-help books, by everyone from Deepak Chopra to that guy Oprah loved with the weird name. Emily tried to “enjoy the now” while she stared out at the palm trees. She hadn’t even realized her leg was twitching until Coco put her hand on her knee.

Mac started again. “Oh, also—”

“Snap, Mac!” Coco cut her off. “Do you need a Yoga Power Hour? You’re scaring Em!” Coco was always the first to rush to someone’s defense when Mac got too bossy, which was why Emily loved her.

“You’re freaking *me* out,” Becks said. She looked like a model but only cared about two things: surfing and her friends.

“We’re almost done,” Mac insisted. She removed an invisible fleck of dust from her navy Ella Moss Collection dress. “Last but not least: Who is always, always, always right?”

“The director,” Emily said quickly. That, at least, was a no-brainer.

“Congrats, babe. You’re almost in.” Mac flashed a devilish grin. “You’ll know you’re *really* in Hollywood when someone is stabbing you in the back or you’re stabbing them in the back.”

Just then, Mac’s phone blared its Fergilicious ringtone.

“Talk to me!” she barked. Everyone in the car was quiet—you never knew who was going to call Mac. She shook her head impatiently. “N-n-no, this is *Mac*. . . . Yes, Davey.”

It was Davey Farris Woodward, aka Emily’s costar, aka her lifelong crush and the reason she’d come to L.A. in the first place! Coco and Becks playfully nudged Emily in the ribs, knowing how much she liked him. Except she didn’t just *like* him—she’d literally plastered her bedroom walls back in Iowa with his photos, ripped from *Star*, *People*, and *Us Weekly*. All Emily wanted in life was to a) act and b) make Davey Farris Woodward fall in love with her (and not necessarily in that order). Which was why she craned her neck to hear every second of Mac’s conversation.

“My mom’s at work,” Mac continued in her usual no-

nonsense tone. Davey was Adrienne Little-Armstrong's biggest client. "Have you tried her office? . . . No, this is *my* cell phone. . . . Yep, that's the number. . . . Noproblemokaybyeeee."

"Davey Woodward is a moron!" Mac announced as she ended the call. "He forgets everything!"

"Well, *you* forgot to tell him to fall in love with Emily on set!" Becks blurted. Coco, Mac, and Becks giggled appreciatively.

For the next two weeks of the shoot, Emily would have to look, dress, and act like a guy, opposite the only guy she had ever hearted. *Deal With It* was about a girl who disguised herself as a boy in order to attend an all-boys' prep school, to play on their soccer team. Cute in theory, but not cute when the FLOHL (Future Love of Her Life) was going to see her in baggy shorts all day. Emily had made a new rule to look exceptionally cute when she arrived on set so that Davey could see her as his PG (Potential Girlfriend). Then they could fall in love and go for romantic hikes in Runyon Canyon with one of Davey's adopted mutt mixes, who would scamper onto rocks and bark at butterflies while she and Davey walked hand in hand, pausing occasionally to look at the clear California view and share their very first offscreen kiss with the Hollywood sign in the background. . . .

Emily was so busy fantasizing about her future love life that she didn't realize the car had pulled in front

of the giant iron gates to the Sony lot. Emily gulped. It was like being the new girl on the first day of school all over again—except that this was the coolest school in the world.

“Break a leg!” Mac chimed as she turned around and waved at Emily.

And then Emily realized: Mac was waving *goodbye*. As in: Mac wasn’t going with her. “Aren’t you coming with me?”

“Negative,” Mac said, slipping on her new Dita sunglasses. She gestured toward Coco and Becks, who had begun playing *Guitar Hero on Tour* on their DS. “We’ve got work to do.”

Coco blew one air kiss and Becks waved as Emily crawled out of the car. She shut the door dejectedly and watched the Prius drive away. Her heart began racing, the back of her neck went cold, and her leg started trembling so much it was hard to walk. Emily wondered if every day of her new life was going to be this nerve-racking. And if so, was it worth it?

Before she could answer her own question, she felt a tap on her shoulder. “Miss Skylar?”

Emily spun on her baby blue Havaianas, wondering who in the world would be calling her “Miss.” She turned to face the tallest, skinniest boy she had ever seen. He looked about sixteen. Emily was pretty sure that he was a production assistant, because he was wearing a headset and holding a clipboard.

"I'm Chris Miller," the boy said, extending a thin forearm. He wore baggy taupe corduroys, orange and yellow Pumas with green laces, and a faded black T-shirt that said FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA'S THE GODFATHER. His hazel eyes were the same shade as his hair, which flopped onto his long golden eyelashes. His right eyebrow was pierced with a tiny nail.

"You can call me Chris," he continued. "Or you can be like all the other egomaniacs and snap your fingers in front of my face."

"Hmm . . ." Emily pretended to think about it. "I think I'll go with Chris."

"Cool." Chris nodded. "You'll be the first person all summer to know my name."

Emily laughed and Chris smiled like he was handing out a VIP pass into his good graces. "I'll show you to your trailer," he said, adjusting his headset. "Follow me."

They walked through the Sony lot, passing the other soundstages. It was like being at Epcot Center: Every one was a mini universe built to look exactly like ancient Rome, or Mars, or New York City. And Emily kept noticing familiar people. In front of Soundstage No. 5, Selena Gomez was talking to a man in a business suit, while Emmy Rossum entered, clutching a coffee drink. In front of Soundstage No. 11, La Lohan herself walked by holding what appeared to be a . . . chinchilla. No wonder it was so hard to spot stars in L.A.—they were

all here! Emily tried to remember everything so that she could give Paige a full report.

Emily smile-nodded. “I feel like I’m officially in Hollywood.”

“Easy, tiger,” Chris said, leading her to a set of double doors marked SOUNDSTAGE NO. 13: SCHOOL. “You know what they say—you’re not in Hollywood unless someone’s stab—”

“Oh no!” Emily pretended to cover her ears with her hands. “I’ve heard it already. It can’t be true.”

“I feel ya,” Chris said thoughtfully. “But it’s true.” With that, he flung open the doors to Soundstage No. 13. It was like that moment in the *Wizard of Oz* when everything went into Technicolor, but instead, Emily’s world magically morphed into New England. There were various sets designed to look like boarding school interiors—one stage was a library, another was an oak-paneled classroom, and another held a dining hall with a giant table and stained glass windows.

Chris led Emily through the soundstages and then out the other side to a giant parking lot. Finally they arrived at a white trailer. Chris tapped the giant gold star on the front that said EMILY SKYLAR. “Home sweet home.”

Emily took dainty steps up the metal staircase to peer inside. The first thing she saw was a circular mirror dotted with big lightbulbs. Next to that was a kitchenette with a giant platter of chocolate chip cookies on the

counter. A table by the couch was covered in gift bags from Marni, Gucci, Anthropologie, and Ron Herman. "What's all this?" Emily asked.

"They're start gifts for you." Chris shrugged. "I sign for them every day. You got one from Adrienne Little-Armstrong, from the director, from your on-set tutor, the casting director, Davey Woodward . . ."

Davey had gotten her a present? Emily's heart soared.

"And I'm sure they all picked them out themselves. . . ."

"Really?" Emily asked, touched.

"No!" Chris scoffed. "That's what assistants are for."

"Oh," Emily's heart sank a little, knowing that Davey hadn't actually chosen her gift himself, but she tried to hide her disappointment. The last thing she wanted was for everyone to find out that she had a major crush on her costar.

Spotting the large closet marked *WARDROBE* Emily walked over and cautiously opened the doors. She braced herself for flannel and other embarrassingly hideous boy costumes.

But as she peered inside the closet, she didn't see gross boy-jeans or boy-shirts or anything boy at all. Instead she saw a colorful assortment of Alice + Olivia dresses and Milly blouses and cute Rock & Republics. Tags from Nanette Lepore, Tibi, and Rachel Pally poked out. Even the closet floor was dotted with velvety shoe bags from Christian Louboutin and Loeffler Randall.

“Um . . . Chris?” Emily said meekly. “I think there’s been a mistake.”

Chris rushed over. “Did we get you the wrong sizes?”

“No, that’s not it at all. It’s just that these are all *girl* clothes,” she said. *The most awesome girl clothes in the world*, she mentally added. “And I don’t ever get to be a girl in the movie.”

“Uh . . .” Chris stammered. He looked terrified.

“Maybe I’m in the wrong trailer?” Emily suggested.

Just then a voice boomed, “*Change in plans, Doll-face!*”

Emily turned around and faced her director, Shane Reed. He wore an all-white suit with his signature cream fedora, and was flanked by his assistant, Giselle, a tall supermodel-like creature who had been at Emily’s audition. Giselle almost never spoke or showed emotion. She smiled coolly.

Emily felt dizzy: Of course there had been a change in plans. They’d probably fired her and replaced her with a real actress. Someone who had actually been in movies. Emily put her hand on the closet door to steady herself.

Shane put his hands on his hips and studied Emily like she was the last square in a sudoku puzzle. “Look how cute and nervous she looks!” he commented to no one in particular. “What are you worried about? Don’t worry, we’re not replacing *you*.”

Emily smiled with relief.

Shane scratched his neck. “We’re replacing the *script*. Apparently this movie has already been made. It’s called *She’s the Man*. And *apparently* no one thought to tell me that when I agreed to direct this bad boy.” He shot a glare at Giselle. “So I guess He’s the Fool.” He pointed at himself.

Emily nodded once to show she understood, but did not think Shane was the fool.

“You *did* get the revised script?” Shane asked. Emily wasn’t sure if Shane was talking to her or Giselle.

Emily shook her head, and Giselle began muttering something about “new script to Emily.”

“Does anyone work around here?” Shane looked at Chris and snapped his fingers. “I need a water.”

Chris nodded obediently, went to the refrigerator, and wordlessly handed Shane a Metromint water.

“So we made a few tweaks to the plot,” Shane said. Emily crossed her fingers, hoping the tweaks hadn’t affected her twenty-eight scenes with Davey or her 914 lines of dialogue.

Shane took a giant swig of the Metromint water and chucked it into the recycling bin. “So here’s the pitch: Davey’s a computer nerd from the wrong side of the tracks. All he wants is to study computers and rule Google. Problem is, the best facility in America is at a girls’ school that just got an awesome grant. So *he* pretends to be a girl named Tiffany so he can follow his dream. And then he meets your character, Kelly, and

you both fall in love over a keyboard, hijinks ensue, yada yada yada . . .”

“Everything Davey was doing—now *you’re* doing. And it’s great, ’cause no one’s *ever* seen a guy trying to be a girl. Except *Tootsie* or *Mrs. Doubtfire*, but those were a thousand years ago, without hotties like Davey.”

Emily’s heartbeat slowed to a normal pace. So she would still get her scenes with Davey, and . . . “You mean, I’m going to be a girl *the whole time?*”

“Bingo, Buttercup!”

Emily suddenly felt like she was floating. It was like she’d already gotten the happy ending to her fairy-tale life. She had great friends in Los Angeles, a starring role in next summer’s blockbuster, and now, thanks to Shane’s change in plans, not only was she going to see her crush every single day, but she was going to actually *look like a girl* when she saw him, with her hair and makeup done by the best stylists in Hollywood. Now all she needed was a kiss from her prince charming and her story would be complete.

Emily looked at her reflection in the brightly lit vanity mirror and smiled. A romance with Davey seemed as inevitable as another Britney breakdown—all she had to do was wait.

Starpower

RAZORBILL

Published by the Penguin Group
Penguin Young Readers Group

345 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, U.S.A

Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, U.S.A

Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario,
Canada M4P 2Y3 (a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)

Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

Penguin Ireland, 25 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland

(a division of Penguin Books Ltd)

Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124,
Australia (a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd)

Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park,
New Delhi-110 017, India

Penguin Group (NZ), Cnr Airborne and Rosedale Roads, Albany, Auckland 1310,
New Zealand (a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd)

Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, 24 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank,
Johannesburg 2196, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Copyright 2009 © Alloy Entertainment

All rights reserved



alloy**entertainment**

Produced by Alloy Entertainment

151 West 26th Street

New York, NY 10001

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data is available

Printed in the United States of America

The scanning, uploading and distribution of this book via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage electronic piracy of copyrighted materials.

Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.