

SAMPLE CHAPTER

PRETTY WRECKED

*Confessions of a Teen Addict
and Her Road to Recovery*

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|| Lunch Break ||

I'd arrive at school high pretty much every day. On time, prepared, engaged ... but high. As I mentioned, getting good grades was important for maintaining the ruse both at school and at home – I'm fine, no reason for concern here! All my time at school was spent in class, studying in a cubby in the library, or hanging out with friends in the class lounge. Or - when I became a Senior - driving to pick up my numbing agents.

After totaling my grandmother's blue Buick the year before, I had recently built enough trust with my Mom to warrant getting my own car. It was a shiny, new (well, used), bronze Honda Accord. And the freedom felt good.

The seniors at our school were allowed to leave campus for lunch or during breaks in their schedule. On days I knew I'd have lunch followed by a free period, I would have just enough time to leave school and speed down Lancaster Avenue to get to West Philadelphia.

There are many parts of West Philly that are beautiful. The University of Pennsylvania, for example, is in West Philadelphia, as are some adorable neighborhoods and excellent restaurants. But the strip of West Philly I would frequent wasn't as attractive – populated with run-down rowhomes, many of which were abandoned and frequented by vagrants. And that's where my dealer – Moses – was located.

Moses sold drugs out of a small corner-convenience store. It was painted white on the outside, the wood rotted and chipped in places. A red, green, and white sign hung out from the roof above: "7-UP." The store was small – just two aisles of snacks and household items. There was a bulletproof wall of glass towards the back of the store where you would pay by slipping money into a little open rectangle on the counter.

I would park my bronze Honda Accord wherever I could on the rutted street and then casually walk over to the little convenience store, my navy-blue kilt wrapped around my waist, white sneakers, blonde hair bouncing. Yeah – to put it lightly, I must have looked a bit out of place. Nonetheless, Moses and I had a good relationship. I bought a lot of pot, hash, mushrooms, and occasionally other goodies from him, which made him (and me) happy. On this particular sunny spring day I had to park my car across the street because things were busy.

Ding-a-ling, the bell above my head sounded as I pushed the door to enter the store. I walked right to the back and spoke through the bulletproof glass wall.

"Moses here? It's Tracy," I said to the guy sitting there.

"Yeah, what you want?" he asked in a monotone.

"Two." I'd done this often enough that I figured he knew what 'two' meant.

"Yeah, wait there."

He got up and walked into the back area which was covered with beads in the doorway. The beads were painted to show a picture of Bob Marley. Fitting. I walked

to the front of the store and waited a few minutes for Moses to get my 'order' together – two ounces of pot, rolled up in two sandwich baggies. When Moses came sauntering toward me, I handed over the cash, turned my back on him and tucked the two baggies into each boob of my bra. Then Moses and I shook hands, smiled, and nodded to each other. I said, "See Ya," and left the store.

Nice! This was a good amount of pot – life was good. But as I jogged to the other side of the street, my foot stepping up on the curb, my car in sight, I heard somebody yell out: "HEY!"

I stopped and turned to see a cop standing on the other side of the street, just a few doors down from Moses' store. He was looking right at me. I froze. I didn't say anything, and I didn't move.

Again he shouted: "Hey! Can you come over here?"

My mind was racing a mile a minute. Oddly enough, it wasn't until that moment that I realized how obvious it all was. Me, a prissy-looking private school girl coming to buy drugs in a shady West Philly convenience store. It was like a spotlight was suddenly on me.

I didn't know how I was going to get out of this one, and I got really real with myself in that moment. I was fucked. So fucked that, as I quietly and slowly crossed back to the other side of the street, I readied myself to silently put my hands against the wall and be searched. I'd totally cooperate. That had to count for something, right?

As the cop slowly walked towards me on the sidewalk, I heard Moses exit the convenience store – the little ding-a-ling chime of the bell when the door was opened.

“Hey, my man! How you doin’?” Moses walked over to the cop and patted his shoulder.

The cop looked at him. The cop looked at me. The cop looked back to him. “Good, man. How are things?” he said to Moses.

“You know, just another day. Been busy this week with people out in this nice weather.”

They were... chatting? Chatting! About the weather? I still stood there. Frozen. Ready to soon be frisked.

Moses looked directly at me, jerked his chin up, and said – “See ya.”

The cop gave me an ever-so-subtle nod, a nod I might have missed if my senses weren't on such high alert at the moment.

And that was it. That was my cue to nod back, continue across the street, get in my new-ish bronze Honda, and drive back to my private school on the Main Line with my bra filled up with pot.

That was close.

But that wouldn't be my last close call.