

The Scum Bag Excerpt

Chapter 1

Kate nudged me.

“Have you seen that?”

She pointed to where Jigger Wright and Shane McClosky were talking. And they were talking to someone I'd never seen before. In fact, I'd never seen anything quite like it - even though I'd seen and fancied quite a few male creatures in my time. He was standing next to those two clowns. Tall, gorgeous, shiny blond hair and a face that was exactly the right shape. He was a Greek god or a super model, or something like that, looking out of this world, even in the decidedly naff uniform of Willsborough High. I felt myself go red and I was suddenly very conscious of the long white socks and scratchy grey skirt.

I thought I'd grown out of that sort of thing, and that I was a sophisticated Upper School student. Now I was behaving like a silly little Lower School girl.

“Julia, Kate, shirts in, blazers on please,” bellowed Mr. Archer, the deputy head.

I could feel myself going even redder as I tucked my shirt in. I was sure it made me look fat and that people could see my underwear while I was fumbling with the shirt. And the Greek god was looking at me.

I glanced across at Kate. She also seemed like a super-model, even at school. She looked great with her shirt in or out. Her hair – cropped to a centimetre all over and natural blond – never had a bad day. The colours of Willsborough High actually suited her, for goodness' sake. She was always like a magnet for the boys – especially Jigger and Shane, and that would mean that they and the Greek God might be over any minute now. I just wanted to disappear into the platforms of my shoes.

“I have heard,” said Kate, “that he's in the same Tutor as them. His real name is Peter Groves, but everybody calls him Ami – short for “amigo” because that's what his Spanish teacher at his old school said to him once and everybody called him that afterwards.”

“Why's he come here?”

“His parents have moved here from London. They sent him here so that he can go on to the sixth form.”

“Hey, Julia!” shouted someone from behind.

I turned round. There were Jigger, Shane and him – grinning at me.

“This is Ami,” said Jigger, smirking from ear to ear. “He’s in your German group.” Jigger turned and punched Ami on the arm.

“Julia’ll look after you, won’t you Julia?” giggled Shane.

They looked so ridiculous. Jigger's mouthful of teeth was grinning like a horse. And Shane with his specs perched on the end of his nose, looked so serious and as if he knew everything in the world. Such a contrast to this – this superior creature from another world. But what must he have thought of me? I was sure I looked a right mess. Oh, I just wished the ground would swallow me up!

“Hi!” said the Greek God. I could feel myself blushing even deeper now. Two cool blue eyes were looking straight at me, cutting right into me. Surely he could understand what I was thinking? Surely he must know I fancied him? Oh why did he have to see me in this stupid, stupid uniform? His eyes were all shiny and he seemed to be finding the whole thing funny.

“Ah! Peter Groves!” It was Mr. Thorpe, our German teacher. He was okay, actually. He made the lessons easy and fun. “I’ve heard a lot about you from your last school. Mandy Dixon is a friend of mine,” Mr Thorpe was saying to that wonderful creature. “Come and let’s get you sorted. Then you can tell me all about the Berlin Scholarship.”

Ami and Mr. Thorpe went into the room. At least now I could admire him from a distance and didn’t have to squirm. I wished he had been in another group, though. He was going to keep me on my toes all the time. And show me up. It would be far better to dream about him in peace.

Mr Thorpe and Ami spent the whole lesson talking, while the rest of us got on with some other work. I kept on taking a crafty look at my Greek god. I was so glad, though, that he was too

absorbed in his conversation to notice what I was doing. The lesson ended and my stomach began to turn over and over as I saw Ami walking over towards me.

Then just as I was getting ready to beam my best smile at him, I broke my nail trying to stuff my German books into my too small bag.

“Pants!” I muttered under my breath.

Ami just stood and grinned.

"Don't worry," he said. "It's only a nail. You look great even with short nails. Are you going to the meeting about the Summer Fete? Jigger said you would be doing something. Could you show me the way?"

I looked up to see those two cool blue eyes staring at me. I thought I was going to pass out.

I mumbled something.

He smiled. I had to look away.

“I'll even carry your bag,” he said.

I felt my neck and shoulders stiffen up. I didn't know how I was going to move. I almost wished I could faint, or that the ground would open and I would disappear out of sight. But in the end, it was great walking down the corridor. I felt as if I was floating everyone was staring at me.

“There're just jealous,” I thought. “He's so gorgeous and he's carrying my bag!”

Most of the others had already arrived when we got to the meeting. Jigger and Shane were at the front. Kate was sitting next to them. She waved to us.

“Shall we go over by them?” I asked. My voice came out all gruff and I could feel myself going red again.

“Sounds good to me,” answered Ami. He gave me a gorgeous smile and those blue eyes danced again.

The room filled up quickly. Soon there were not enough chairs.

“Hold on,” said Ami. He lifted himself from his chair and sat down behind me. Then he put his arms round my waist and pulled me towards him.

“Okay?” he whispered.

I couldn't speak. I should have been enjoying this. But I just felt awkward and didn't know how to respond. He put his chin on my shoulder. I tried to relax.

Adrian Chambers had taken charge as usual. He cleared his throat and everyone stopped chatting.

“As you know, everyone, we are meeting to-day to discuss student ideas for the Summer Fete. We think we will get more students attending and therefore spending more money if most of the ideas come from us. We can make a lot more money then for the Y12 common room. So, bright ideas, please.”

I could feel Ami's breath on my neck and his chest going up and down. I didn't dare move.

Jigger suddenly put his hand up.

“We could have a go-cart track. Shane and I could paint it on the upper playground. Donald Smith says he and his older brother will lend us theirs. We could charge for rides.”

“How could we make it safe?” asked Adrian.

“Well, we could put old tyres round the outside of the track. We could get them from the tip,” volunteered Shane.

“Good idea. Can you two look after that?” asked Adrian.

There were then some less spectacular suggestions – second hand books, cakes, plant stalls and some Year 8 students offered to run a fortune-telling booth. To be quite honest, none of these ideas seemed all that great to me. Not that I could think of anything better. But it just seemed to be the same old boring stuff as usual.

One of the younger girls wanted to have a pet show.

“It'll really be difficult to organise,” said Adrian. “Are you sure you can manage it?”

The girl stared at Adrian. She didn't seem to know what to say. She frowned and then looked at the floor.

"I'm not sure," she mumbled at last.

"Don't be such spoil sports! I'll organise that!" shouted a voice.

It was Lisa Bishop. Kate looked at me. I shook my head. Kate rolled her eyes up. Lisa sauntered forward. As usual, the first two buttons of her shirt were undone. She waddled when she walked. She had massive hips. Kate and I just did not know what the boys saw in her. She never wore make-up, and she had the most stupid hair cut. But everybody took notice of her.

I even felt Ami pull himself up as she turned to face us. I pushed myself forward so that I wasn't touching him any more.

"Where do you think you're going?" he whispered, as he pulled me back.

I was now leaning quite heavily into him. Little tingles were going up and down my spine.

Lisa was now beaming at us all.

"I'll charge everybody entry fees. And all the kids get a certificate. We'll keep all the animals in the shade. And dogs and cats will have to be kept on a lead."

"Sounds good, Lisa," said Adrian. Even straight-laced old Adrian, who'd never had a girlfriend, had got that look about him. That sparkly, soppy look that all the boys got when Lisa was speaking. I wished I'd had eyes in the back of my head and could have seen how Ami was looking.

Kate nudged me and raised her eyebrows.

"We'll have to have someone to judge, of course," Lisa continued. She looked round the room, seeking out a victim. The boys were positively panting. Even Kate was no competition.

"I know," said Lisa, "The new boy can do it. What do you say, Peter?"

It took me a few seconds to grasp who she was talking to. Ami may have only been here a few hours, but Ami was definitely his name.

He pushed me forwards slightly so that he could get out of the chair. He made his way to the front of the room.

"Okay," he said. "Should be good. But I would have liked to enter my dog, Wolfgang."

"Wolfgang?" asked Lisa spluttering. "What sort of name is that for a dog? Come to that, what sort of dog is it?"

"Well, he's a German expert, ain't he?" Jigger called out.

"Good job the dog's a German shepherd then," added Shane, laughing at his own pathetic little joke. Then he looked towards me and mouthed.

"You've lost your place, Julia."

I didn't know whether he meant as top in German or as the girl the new boy was most interested in. He was probably right, whichever he meant.

Lisa was fluttering her eyelids now. Yes, she managed to flutter them all right, even though she never wore mascara.

"Well, maybe you and Wolfgang could judge them together," she said beaming up at him.

At least she looked quite silly next to him. He was so much taller than her. He'd have a job kissing her. I was probably just about the right height. My head would fit neatly on his shoulder.

"Actually, folks," he said. "I've got a really cool idea. Something we used at my last school. It raised a heck of a lot of money. And it was a good laugh."

"Yeah, well, we always like good ideas," Adrian said enthusiastically. "Spit it out."

Kate poked me in the ribs.

"You were almost sitting on his lap," she accused. "You don't fancy him, do you?"

I looked away and shrugged. I had more important things to do than talk to Kate. I needed to keep my eye on that great example of attractive male.

"The basic idea," explained Ami "is that we take it in turns sitting under a bucket of water and getting drenched. Some of the girls - dressed in bikinis, of course, - can go round selling balls to the punters."

There were a few giggles at that remark. Ami grinned.

"The sort you throw at things," he continued. "And that's what they do. The customers throw a ball at a target and that empties the bucket of water over whoever is underneath. We can even let them choose the next victim. And if the customer happens to be one of the teachers who've found us a pain- they're bound to pay a lot. "

"Just one thing, though," said Adrian. "How would you set the bucket up so that it would tip over them?"

"Well, we the frame from an old swing set," said Ami. "Then whoever sat on a seat underneath it. We had a target at the side. The bucket balanced on top until you hit the target at the side, then it swivelled over and the person underneath got soaked."

"That sounds brilliant," simpered Lisa. The eyelashes were fluttering. How did she do that without a trace of eye make-up?

"Trouble is," said Ami, "you'll be stuck with all the pets."

You should have seen her face.

"But I think we could have Julia as one of the ball girls," he said, looking my way. Oh no, I blushed again! He'd singled me out instead of luscious Lisa. "And Kate and Jenni. And one or two more." He looked around the room, searching for other better-looking girls, I supposed. That wasn't so nice. But then he looked back at me and grinned.

"No way will you get me to do that," hissed Jenni. "They're only doing it so than can see us in our bikinis."

"No, it'll just be a laugh," Kate answered.

I couldn't say anything. I was just too gobsmacked that *he*, my wonderful Greek god, had singled me out.

Soon the room was buzzing. Shane volunteered his old swing, and a group of us arranged to meet at his house the Saturday before the fete and **carry** it, for goodness sake, all the way to school. Then we'd paint it and see about rigging the bucket and target up.

Adrian brought the meeting to an end, but several people hung around Ami, asking him questions about how it had been done at his old school.

"Come on, let's go," said Kate. "You've got to finish that Maths before next lesson."

So we had to leave him, surrounded by almost the whole of Years 10 and 11. But he did look up as we walked out of the door and waved and grinned. I hoped Kate didn't see me blush yet again.