

Part Two Chapter Two

About a month later Bishop Haag was playing against McKellam Academy in football. April knew this was going to happen once in a while, she and Mitchell had discussed it. At the time it seemed like a good thing, now April was not so sure. The Junior Varsity games were Fridays after school, Varsity games were Saturday mornings.

As April got off the bus at McKellam Academy Friday after school, she scanned the landscape. No Mitch Hudgins. That's probably a good thing, April kidded herself. The girls made their way to the field, toting pom-poms and water bottles, the boys went to the locker room. Some of the McKellam JV players were on the field. April spied Dennis. She'd almost forgotten Dennis' parents made him go to McKellam instead of Brokerstown, after catching him and Linda Garasse in bed together. It seemed like a lifetime ago when they all went to the graduation dance. Linda was crying. She and Dennis vowed to stay together. April and Mitchell chose the opposite road, didn't they, April reminded herself. She wondered if they were still together.

Just then Dennis noticed April. He came running over. The cheerleaders stopped what they were doing and watched the handsome football player run over calling April's name. April ran a few feet onto the field and gave him a big hug. He picked her up and twirled her around.

"April! How the hell are you?" He said enthusiastically.

"I'm great Dennis, I'm so glad to see you!" She resisted the urge to ask immediately about Mitch. "How's Linda?" She asked instead.

"She's good, real good. I saw her yesterday. She might try to come to the game, I'm not sure though."

"Her parents would let her?"

"Hell no, no, they can't know." They were still in the sneaking around business. Maybe it keeps their romance hot, April mused. Just then the JV coach blew his whistle and Dennis had to run. No chance to ask about Mitch, thought April, maybe that's a good thing.

April was very distracted from the game. She couldn't help but investigate every blonde head that caught her eye. And she had half an eye out for Linda Garasse as well. She scanned the bleachers when the girls did a crowd response cheer, facing the bleachers. "When I say spirit, you say got it! Spirit! Got it! Spirit! Got it!" She realized if he was here,

he would probably be sitting on the other side of the field, the "Home" side. She just couldn't see that far.

After the game ended April and the girls were walking back to the bus. That's when she spied Linda and a very sweaty and dirty Dennis talking with Mitch Hudgins. April's heart leapt straight into her throat in one fell swoop.

"April! Over here!" called Linda. Mitchell turned, pushed his fingers through his hair, and watched her approach. He looked so good, wearing khakis and leaning his weight on one foot. She was pretty sweaty herself in her heavy cable knit cheerleading sweater meant for cold weather games. Or was it because she was looking at Mitch Hudgins, the guy she stupidly, I mean not stupidly, broke up with, she thought to herself. At this point she wasn't sure. It was hard to deny that Dennis and Linda were making it work. She and Mitch didn't even try. And now the four of them were talking. Two of them madly in love. Which two? April pondered. The two that weren't supposed to be seeing each other anymore? That still didn't clarify, now did it, April thought.

"Hey guys!" April said. She didn't really know what to say. Here she was hoping to run into Mitch the whole time, and now that she has, she had nothing to say. Or nothing she could say out loud, anyway. They chatted away. Mostly Linda and April. Linda was telling her about Brokerstown High, about Cassie, who April had not seen much of lately, Colleen, Tonya and Chad. Seemed like she deliberately left Melissa Trotter out of the conversation.

Mitchell just looked down at her. He was tall and handsome and he just kept looking at her. April pretended not to notice and chatted with Linda. Soon Marisol walked down the steps of the bus.

"April, Let's go!" she called across the parking lot.

"Who's that?" remarked Dennis. Linda playfully smacked him with her purse, old lady style.

"Yeah, she gets that a lot," replied April as she picked up her pompoms. "See you guys around!" she started trotting away.

"April!" It was Mitch. April stopped in her tracks and turned around. "You look nice in your cheerleading uniform." He called.

"Nice?" April questioned dipping her chin and raising an eyebrow at him. By her questioning that little word, it turned on the sexual tension between them. It was easy to do. April couldn't resist the line he offered her.

Mitch looked at her, seemed to ponder something for a minute, then jogged over to where she was standing. Again her heart was in her throat. She tried to swallow it down.

"I miss you April," he began.

"Mitchell, don't." she said. He took her face in his hands. She put her hands on his chest. She couldn't help herself. Marisol yelled again.

"Coach is getting mad April, and, hello Mitchell Hudgins!" she giggled, climbing back into the bus. Mitchell looked at April.

"I might have told her a little about us." April confessed.

"I like it when you say "us". This time it was Mitch who used the line offered to him. "Mitch, don't," she repeated.

"I could throw pebbles at your window sometime April," It was a sexual reference, they were good at that. April remembered back last summer when Mitch climbed up the chimney and into April's bedroom window. They had sex for the first time right there in April's pink canopy bed. Things were good back then. Real good. But that was then and this is now, April told herself.

"Mitch, stop, I've got to go." There was a long look, topaz to blue. Then a hug. Just a hug. It was painful. She got on the bus and cried into Penny and Marisol's arms.

As they got off the bus 50 minutes later, April made a request. "Don't tell Owen about this, please."

"We won't," Penny replied for the both of them. But it didn't take long. There were a lot of other observers of that little display.

"How come you never told me about Mitchell Hudgins?" Owen confronted her at the party they went to Saturday night. Actually April and Jay got a ride with Denise, Jay's older sister, a Senior, and met Owen there. How he knew his first and last name April didn't know, but she needed some quick thinking here.

"Honestly, Owen, I'm over him, It was just a junior high thing," April lied. Owen bought it hook, line and sinker. Because their relationship was a high school relationship, much more adult, and on the up and up than a measly junior high relationship.

April and Owen wandered to a dark corner of the backyard. Owen cupped her face with both hands and started kissing her. April kissed him back. Was he after proof that April

was over Mitchell Hudgins? I'd like to dig up a serving of that as well! April admonished herself.

They were mingling in the backyard drinking another beer when Jay came quickly out the door. He was obviously trying to locate someone in a hurry.

"What's the matter Jay?" April asked him.

"Ummm, ummm, dude, Owen!" He sounded somewhat crazed. They walked back into the house with Jay one step behind. As April lifted her head upon crossing the threshold she saw Dennis with a couple of football players from McKellam. That made sense, it was a football party, but behind them was Mitchell Hudgins cracking a beer, talking and laughing with some guys.

He looked up and saw her. April could have sworn time itself actually paused for a moment. They had tunnel vision connecting them with laser precision. Jay saw it, Dennis saw it, and Owen saw it too. There was the proof Owen had been seeking, he clearly had his answer about April being over Mitch.

Mitch walked up to them. He gave a friendly hello to April and Jay. April awkwardly introduced Owen. It did not go unnoticed that April did not use the word "boyfriend". She just couldn't choke it out. She simply told him his name. Mitch cocked his head to the side quizzically, smiled and shook his hand. Mitchell was going to have to investigate this further, he told himself. Marisol approached and introduced herself, in her charming way, breaking the tension. She already knew who he was. April left them chatting there as she followed Dennis out the door.

"What is he doing here?" She demanded.

"Same 'ol thing April, he wanted to see you." April remembered back to when Mitch insisted on coming with Dennis and Chad to crash Cassie's sleepover last May. They were broken up then too. Jeez, we break up a lot, April pointed out to herself, I guess we're just not meant to be. April decided to try to hold on to that thought.

She turned and looked through the glass door to find Mitchell watching her talk to Dennis. He took a swig of his beer without even taking his eyes off her. That was a trick. But get serious here April, she told herself, you are in trouble with a capital T.

Owen's ride back to Peaford was leaving. April was thankful. Owen was beside himself. He grabbed her hand and made her walk out front with him.

"I think you should go too," Owen began. April feigned innocence. "Denise Manino is well aware of my curfew, Owen, I trust her."

“That’s not at all what I’m talking about April, and you damn well know it.” She had pissed him off. “What are you going to say to Mitch? Surely you are going to talk to him the moment I pull away.” Now April was getting pissed, but she couldn’t well blame him.

“I’m going to tell him we’re not meant to be,” April remembered her thoughts from earlier. Owen gave her a long look. He wanted to believe her. Hell, April wanted to believe herself. He kissed her and left.

When she walked in she noticed Marisol and Dennis in full flirt mode. Hmm. She’ll have to quiz her later about that. April walked right past all of them heading for the backyard once again.

“I need another beer!” she said as she walked past. She was feeling rather tipsy, but she didn’t care. Her life was a little crazy at the moment. Mitch laughed out loud as she said it.

“Me too!” he added.

“Sure you do!” quipped Jay. Mitch followed her out the door.

They practically bumped heads reaching for a beer at the same time. He took them both and put them down on a stump.

“April.” He said.

“Mitchell” she said using his full name for dramatic emphasis. “What are you doing here?” she asked for the second time tonight.

“Free country!” he crooned. April chuckled at his response, referring to the time April’s parents went out of town last June. Harriet forbade him from coming into the house while they were away, but there was no way Harriet could stop him from being in the neighborhood.

She smiled at him, brought on by the memory. He smiled slightly too. They had history. He gently reached for her hands with his down at their thighs. April brought all four hands to Mitch’s face.

“We’re jus’ not meant to be.” She said. Was she slurring or was her voice quivering?

“I know,” he said, “But I wanted to see you. Seeing you yesterday for that short time wasn’t enough.” April was stuck on the “I know” part. He just admitted that they were not meant to be. It hit April hard, she wasn’t expecting that.

“That’s what being broken up is like, Mitchell, NOT seeing each other!” She was getting worked up. He was thinking that this was not going the way he wanted this conversation to go. He grabbed her hand and walked into the same dark part of the yard where April and Owen had made out a while ago. They needed more privacy.

They looked at each other. They were mad for each other. She had too much to drink.

“I still want you Mitchell,” April confessed. “Wanting” each other was their special word. It always had a desirous, sexual connotation. A sexy smile spread across his face. April using that word gave Mitch the green light.

He grabbed her and kissed her. Hard. She moaned she loved it so much. She couldn’t get enough of him. Neither could he. Is this what not being meant for each other felt like? April wasn’t sure.

Denise found them and handed April her coat. “What the hell are you doing April?” Denise said flatly. Perhaps it did not go unnoticed that April had just achieved making out with two different guys at the same party. At that, April threw up in the grass. Mitch looked at Denise. Denise rolled her eyes.