

## Holting out for a Dream

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# **Holting out for a Dream**

by [NorahBolt56](#)

## Summary

This piece is set during Laura's college years (and was written as part of a fanfic challenge). A big thank you to the writers of the RS episodes I have referenced in this piece for giving us some insights into Laura's past.

# Chapter 1

1974..

Eighteen year old Laura Holt lined up with the other freshmen at the registration desk at Stanford University feeling both excited and a little nervous. She still couldn't quite believe it – here she was, finally at college. She'd worked hard for it though she reminded herself with a degree of pride. After her father had left two years previously, the Holt family finances were tight so she knew the only way she could get to go to a good university was to get a scholarship. So she had studied hard and been rewarded with a math scholarship to Stanford. She'd also found that throwing herself into her studies had helped distract her from the pain she had felt when he left.

She would have liked her mother to have shown a bit more pride in her efforts though. “Yes that's nice dear but what is a girl going to do with a math degree?” Abigail had asked her while Laura tried not to roll her eyes. She couldn't help herself though when her mother followed that comment with, “Well at least you might find yourself a prospective husband there.”

“Mother – I'm going to college to get an education, not a husband!” Laura had replied emphatically.

Abigail looked at her, shaking her head a little at her headstrong younger daughter. “Well you should take a leaf out of your sister Frances's book Laura – look at her, engaged to be married to a wonderful young man who's going to be a dentist. She's got her future set - a man with great prospects to provide for her and their future children. What more could you possibly want?” she went on as Laura gritted her teeth.

“I'll tell you what I want Mother – I want to be able to provide for myself, and not have to rely on a man for my income or my lifestyle. I want to be successful in my own right..” Laura retorted but her mother cut her off.

“Oh Laura dear you have a lot to learn about life. It's a man's world – the sooner you realise that the better.”

Laura went to argue but thought better of it, knowing it would get her nowhere. Anyway, she had thought to herself, I'll soon be away from all this, living my own life the way I want to.

Frances and her fiancée Donald had helped her bring her belongings up to Stanford. Her mother had insisted on coming as well, driving Laura crazy as they sat together in the back seat of Donald's car.

“Now always make sure you wear clean underwear dear,” Abigail prattled on as Laura rolled her eyes.

“Mother – I'm not five years old you know!” she replied as Donald tried not to chuckle as he caught Laura's eye in the rearview mirror and gave her an encouraging wink. Laura grinned

ruefully back at him – she liked Donald. He was in his last year of a degree in dentistry at USC and he was a good, decent guy who made her sister happy.

“Well even so Laura it never hurts to remember. And don’t wander around campus by yourself at night. And have you got pepper spray? You never know when you might need that. And make sure you call home at least once a week...” Abigail prattled on as Laura tuned out. Just a couple more hours Laura, she told herself as she forced a smile onto her face, and you won’t have to put up with her until semester break.

After they had settled her into her dorm room Donald thankfully convinced Frances & Abigail that they should leave Laura to it, sensing that she wanted to be on her own and away from her mother’s nagging. “Thanks,” she said gratefully in his ear as she hugged him goodbye.

“No worries Laura – have fun hey?” he replied with a warm smile as she nodded.

“Oh I can’t believe my little sister’s going off to college!” Frances exclaimed as she hugged her as well. “Look at you, you little thing - all grown up!” Frances gushed as Laura smiled a little wryly.

“Yes well I’m not so little anymore Frances,” she reminded her. She knew Frances meant well but sometimes she found her as irritating as her mother.

“Well good luck dear,” Abigail said as she gave Laura a peck on her cheek. “Now don’t forget to eat your vegetables, no late night parties – make sure you’re in bed at a reasonable time...” she started to go on again as Laura nodded.

“Yes mother,” she replied as she shot Donald a glance that said “Help!”.

“Ah Abigail look at the time – we really should get going. It’s a bit of a drive back to Los Angeles you know,” Donald commented.

“Oh yes of course Donald – you’re so practical,” Abigail replied as she beamed at him and Laura breathed a sigh of relief.

“Goodbye Mother,” Laura said as they hugged briefly then they left her to it. As Laura waved them goodbye she thought to herself with a smile, “And so begins the next chapter of my life.”

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After registration, Laura headed off to her dormitory, 4 East. There were four other girls already there – Barbara, Judy, Carly & Tess. “Hi I’m Laura,” she introduced herself with a smile. “Welcome to 4 East,” Barbara said with a smile. The five of them quickly got to know each other – Barbara was studying psychology, Judy – Business, Carly – Journalism and Tess – Medicine.

Over the years they spent rooming together the five of them became firm friends. Laura continued to catch up with them from time to time when she could after graduation, always

looking forward to reliving their time as the ‘girls from 4 East’.

## Chapter 2

A few weeks after semester started the girls in 4 East were sitting around chatting & laughing late one night with some pizza and beers. “Oh have you seen some of those guys in that Alpha Kappa Pi fraternity? Oh my – talk about hot!” Barbara commented as the others agreed, although Laura was a bit less enthusiastic than the others. Yes those guys were good looking but they were so immature in Laura’s eyes. Laura’s head had been turned however by a guy on campus, but not a student. From the moment she had walked into her first calculus class she had developed a huge crush on the calc professor, Alex Winters. Unlike most of her other lecturers who seemed positively ancient, Professor Winters was in his late twenties in his first year of lecturing, having recently completed his PhD. He was tall, dark and handsome and could make something even as dry as calculus seem interesting. She knew she wasn’t alone in her interest in him – practically all the girls in her class swooned over him. All it took was for him to flash a smile and it seemed like there was a collective sigh from the females in the room.

Laura was snapped out of her day-dreaming about Professor Winters when the other girls dissolved into laughter at something Carly had said. “How about you Laura? How many guys have you slept with?” Judy asked as Laura looked momentarily embarrassed before forcing a smile onto her face.

“Oh c’mon girls I don’t like to kiss and tell,” she replied hurriedly with a slightly nervous giggle, not wanting to admit that the number was actually zero.

“Oh c’mon Laura fess up – it can’t be more than Carly has surely!” Tess persisted with a laugh as Carly poked her tongue out at Tess and Laura fought to control the blush that was starting to spread across her face. Barbara looked at her a little incredulously as realization suddenly dawned on her.

“Oh my God Laura – are you still a virgin?” she asked with a laugh as Laura didn’t know whether to feel embarrassed or ticked off.

“No.. of course not,” she tried to deny it as she averted her gaze from the other four girls but then she realized it was pointless to try and deny it. “Okay, okay, - yes I am. There I’ve admitted it – are you happy now?” she retorted a little defensively. “I just haven’t met anyone I felt that strongly about yet that I wanted to go all the way with,” she added, trying to justify her actions (or lack thereof).

Sure she’d dated in high school and done certain things with boys but she had always stopped things before they went too far. She’d done plenty of kissing with Marty Klopman she remembered and even let him get to second base a couple of times but nothing more. She’d been tempted to go all the way on occasion but then she decided when she did finally lose her virginity she wanted it to be on her terms - not just cause everyone else was doing it (or so they said anyway) or because some guy expected her to.

And from what she'd heard from some of her high school friends she couldn't see what all the fuss was about anyway – most of them who had gone all the way had described it as rather disappointing and pretty much over before it all started. She suspected if she had let Marty get to home base that would have been the case as well – he wasn't that great a kisser and his clumsy groping of her breasts hadn't given her much confidence that she'd experience any sort of 'magical moment' with him.

She knew it was probably an unrealistic expectation fuelled by the romance books she read on occasion, but she had always envisaged her first time to be with someone who knew what he was doing, who would give her as much pleasure as he was getting. Who would know how to touch her to bring her to life and who would make her a woman in an unhurried, romantic fashion – not in the back seat of a car or sitting outside Griffith Observatory.

"Well c'mon girl – you gotta fix that situation!" Carly laughed. "You don't know what you're missing," she added with a cheeky wink.

"Oh I will – when the time's right," Laura assured them.

"Well there's no time like the present!" Judy exclaimed with a smile.

When Laura looked a bit hesitant a sly grin crossed Barbara's face. "How about a little incentive Laura? I bet you can't sleep with a guy by the end of the week," she stated as Laura looked at her a little shocked.

"By the end of the week? C'mon that's not enough time," she went to protest.

"Of course it is," Tess chimed in. "You don't have to marry the guy Laura – just go and pick one up and get it over with. That is unless you don't think you can?" Tess taunted her a little, trying to goad her into action.

Laura Holt was never one to back down from a challenge though. "Of course I can," she retorted, a determined set to her jaw. "Fine – you're on. By the end of the week I will have slept with a guy," she stated adamantly as the other girls clapped & whistled.

"Atta girl Laura," Judy said as she patted her on the back encouragingly, then asked with a mischievous grin, "So any idea who the lucky guy might be to pop your cherry? I'm sure you could go out tonight and pick up any number of frat boys who'd be more than willing to oblige."

"Oh I have an idea – but it's not some immature frat boy," Laura replied with a mischievous twinkle in her brown eyes and a cheeky dimpled grin.

"Well who then?" Barbara asked as the other girls all looked at her expectantly.

"Professor Winters," she replied as her grin got a bit wider at the look of shocked disbelief on her friends' faces.

"Professor Winters ???" the four of them asked in unison as a smug smile crossed Laura's face and she nodded.

“Oh I saw him the other day – he’s dreamy!” Tess remarked.

“He certainly is,” Laura agreed.

“Trying to get some extra credit hey Laura?” Carly commented with a wink as they all laughed.

“So how are you going to ah..attract his interest so to speak?” Barbara asked curiously.

Laura smiled a little cheekily then announced, “Oh I have a plan.”

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Laura was glad she didn’t have a calculus class the next day – she needed time to prepare and also to psych herself up for what she had planned. The day after, she took her seat in Professor’s Winter’s class with a mixture of excitement and trepidation, adjusting the large red glasses she had bought the day before. She wanted something that would get his attention, make her look brainier perhaps, she had thought. The glasses and the short skirt she was wearing that showed off her legs seemed to do the trick as he smiled at her as she walked in and took a seat in the front row.

She found it hard to concentrate during the lecture, hoping she would have the courage to pull off her plan. She tried to ignore the little voice in her head that said ‘What if he’s not interested? You’re just going to make a fool of yourself’, but if there was one thing Laura Holt was, it was determined.

Before she knew it the lecture had finished and as the other students started filing out she deliberately stayed behind, then when they were the only two left in the room she approached him as he was packing his lecture notes away in his briefcase. “Excuse me Professor Winters..” she greeted him as she tried to control the slight tremor in her voice. ‘Icy calm Laura’, she told herself firmly, a mantra she had come up with to stop herself from exploding every time her mother nagged her, which had varying degrees of success.

He looked up to see the young woman standing in front of him. “Alex..please. Professor Winters makes me sound old,” he insisted with a dazzling smile as a dimpled smile crossed Laura’s face in response. “How can I help you.. Norah isn’t it?”

“Ah it’s Laura actually.. Laura Holt,” she corrected him.

“Well Miss Holt what can I do for you?”

Laura swallowed the lump in her throat as a response to his question jumped into her mind that she decided would not be at all appropriate to say. “Ah..I was just wondering if you do private tuition sessions at all? I’m struggling a bit with some of the um.. equations,” she replied hurriedly, hoping to sound convincing.

He regarded her for a moment, wondering if she was really struggling with calculus or her libido. He was aware of the effect he had on his young female students and she wouldn’t be the first he had given some ‘special lessons’ to. She was certainly cute he thought to himself



and she had knockout legs he observed. And those glasses drew attention to her deep brown eyes which had a sparkle to them he found rather appealing.

“Well yes actually I do – always willing to help one of my students who needs a bit of extra attention,” Alex replied with a twinkle in his steely grey eyes. “Are you free tonight? Perhaps you could come around to my place and we can go over some..figures,” he stated as he gave her a meaningful look, figuring if she was really just interested in math she would run a mile at his innuendo.

Laura fought to control the blush that was threatening to creep up her face as she smiled and replied, “That sounds great.”

He smiled back at her, pleased that she hadn’t run a mile. “Here’s my address – how about around seven?” he said as he jotted down his address on a piece of paper and handed it to her with a smile.

“Seven it is,” Laura replied as she tried to control the tremor in her voice, not quite believing how easy it had been to arrange.

“See you tonight then Laura - looking forward to working on some things with you,” he said with a promising look that just about reduced her to jelly as he picked up his briefcase and walked out of the lecture hall.

A small smile crossed Laura’s face as she felt both a thrill of anticipation and a hell of a lot of nervousness.

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“Oh my God Laura that’s gutsy!” Judy said in admiration when she told her friends later on that afternoon what had transpired between her and Professor Winters.

“C’mon girl we have to pick out an outfit for you,” Tess said excitedly as she started going through Laura’s closet. “Where’s your sexy stuff?” she asked as Laura looked a trifle embarrassed.

“I don’t have any ‘sexy stuff’,” she replied a little hurriedly.

“No worries – you can borrow one of my dresses. We’re about the same size I think,” Carly said as she started pulling some out of her closet.

“But if I’m supposed to be going there for a tutoring session I can’t dress too sexy,” Laura pointed out.

“Come off it Laura – you think he doesn’t know what you’re really after? After all those things he said to you? Something tells me you’re gonna get some lessons tonight but not in math”, Barbara laughed as did the other girls.

“How about this one Laura?” Carly said as she held up what looked to be a few strips of black fabric that left very little to the imagination.

“Where’s the rest of it?” Laura replied drolly.

She finally decided on a red one which while a bit revealing at least didn’t make her look like a hooker.

Judy did Laura’s makeup for her then as she was in the bathroom doing her hair and trying desperately to control the butterflies in her stomach, Carly walked in and closed the door behind her, then pressed something into her palm. “I’m sure he’ll have it covered so to speak, but just in case, here’s something to protect yourself with girlfriend,” she said as Laura looked into her palm to see a packet of condoms.

“I figured you’re not on the pill yet, am I right?” she asked as Laura shook her head, a little embarrassed.

“Well you may want to think about that if you’re going to make a habit of this,” Carly stated with a smile as Laura nodded and thanked her.

She hesitated for a moment then asked her more experienced friend, “What’s it like – the first time I mean?”

“Well hopefully your first time will be better than mine. I was sixteen in the back of a car which wasn’t the most comfortable place for starters,” Carly sighed with a rueful grin. “He was my first serious boyfriend. He didn’t really know what he was doing anymore than I did so it was all over pretty quickly. It wasn’t great but well it got better with a bit more practice. And then the first time I was with a guy who really knew what he was doing – oh boy!” Carly continued with a cheeky grin. “I think your Professor Winters looks like the kind of guy who knows what he’s doing,” she added as a hopeful smile spread across Laura’s face.

“How will I know? If he knows what he’s doing I mean?” she asked curiously.

“Oh trust me honey – you’ll know,” Carly replied with a mischievous wink then said, “Just try and relax and have fun. You look great by the way.”

Laura smiled and thanked her then followed her out of the bathroom, popping the red glasses into her bag and thinking to herself, “Well here goes,” as she tried to appear more confident than she felt.

The girls all piled into Barbara’s car and drove to the address Professor Winters had given Laura. They pulled up a little way down the street from his apartment block. Laura momentarily looked like a deer caught in the headlights then steeling her resolve she smoothed her dress, grabbed her bag and got out of the car.

“You go girl!” Carly said to her encouragingly as the others nodded. “Have fun!” Tess called as the car pulled away from the curb, Laura waving goodbye to them with a small smile.

She took a deep breath then head held high she walked into the apartment building and caught the lift up to the third floor. She walked down the corridor to his apartment then hesitated a moment before knocking on the door. ‘Last chance to back out Holt,’ she thought to herself but then with a shake of her head told herself firmly, ‘No Laura, you’ve made your

mind up, now you have to see it through. You're never going to achieve anything if you back out just because you're scared.'

With that thought in mind she slipped on her red glasses and knocked on the door. It didn't take long for Alex to open it, a smile crossing his face as he saw her standing there in a little red dress that showed off her slender figure. Something tells me she's not here for tutoring – well not in math anyway, he thought to himself as his smile got a bit wider. "Evening Laura - come in," he greeted her as she thanked him and smiled back at him, momentarily losing herself in his eyes as she fought to control her nerves.

"Nice dress," he remarked as his eyes travelled over her and she looked a little embarrassed for a moment or two before she forced a neutral expression onto her face.

"Thanks – it's just something I pulled out of the closet," she replied hurriedly.

"Shall we get to it then?" he asked with a grin as Laura looked a little taken aback, thinking to herself, 'Boy this guy doesn't muck around.'

"Um..yes.. I guess so," she replied a little awkwardly and as he looked at her he tried not to chuckle at the expression on her face.

"You did bring your books didn't you?" he asked with a twinkle in his eye.

"Oh yes of course," Laura replied with a nervous giggle, half relieved but also wondering if he really thought that was what she was there for.

Alex gestured towards the table. "Take a seat – make yourself comfortable," he said. "Would you like a drink? I know you're not twenty-one, but I won't tell anyone if you don't," he added with a grin as Laura grinned back and nodded and he poured them both a glass of wine. Laura gratefully accepted the glass and took a large gulp.

Laura went along with the charade as she opened up a book. "So where do you want to start?" Alex asked as he sat down next to her and she tried to control her reaction to having him sit so close to her.

"Ah.. well I've always found quadratic equations a bit hard," she replied, then inwardly grimaced at the last word she said, as she noticed his mouth turn up at the corners a bit.

"Laura can I ask you something?" Alex suddenly said as Laura nodded, momentarily losing her voice.

"Why did you come here tonight?" he asked gently as she looked down to the floor for the moment then decided to bite the bullet.

She met his intense gaze and replied, "Why do you think I came here Prof..Alex?" turning the tables on him.

At that a pleasantly surprised smile crossed his face. Despite her apparent nervousness she had a bit of spunk as well which he found very attractive. "Hmm...maybe something like this," he murmured as he leant closer to her and kissed her softly. When she didn't draw away

and responded to him he deepened the kiss a bit as Laura thought to herself, wow, he's certainly a better kisser than Marty Klopman. When they finally drew apart they shared a smile. "Am I on the right track?" Alex asked as Laura smiled a little shyly then replied, "Yes..yes you are."

"Good," he stated with a grin as he stood up, pulling her into his arms. "Guess we won't be needing this then" he laughed as he picked up the calculus book and threw it over his shoulder.

"Guess not," Laura laughed.

With that Alex gently removed her glasses. "You have the most beautiful brown eyes," he murmured as he gazed into them and Laura felt like she was melting.

"Thanks," she replied as his lips found hers again, and he pulled her against him. He ran a hand through her hair then trailed it down her neck then lower, lightly skimming over a breast as she felt a shiver of desire run through her. Alex felt it too as he momentarily pulled his mouth away from hers and nodded towards his bedroom.

"Ah..shall we?" he asked as he gave her a meaningful look. Laura hesitated momentarily then nodded with a dimpled smile, feeling both thrilled but a bit apprehensive at the same time as he took her by the hand and led her into his bedroom.

Once they were in there Laura found herself panicking a bit as she realized she didn't really have a clue what to do next. Alex smiled at her and emboldened by that a bit Laura began unbuttoning his shirt, her fingers fumbling a bit with his buttons. Sensing her nervousness Alex gently covered her hands with his own. "Laura..," he said softly as she looked at him, "You have done this before haven't you?"

At that her mind raced – was her inexperience that obvious? she worried. She initially thought of trying to deny it but she knew deep down that she couldn't. She focused her gaze on the floor rubbing her forehead in consternation. Finally she looked back up at him. "Well not exactly. I've done..some things, but not ..everything," she confessed, an embarrassed blush colouring her cheeks.

Alex regarded her for a moment. "So why now? Why me? If you don't mind me asking," he asked gently as he ran a hand through his wavy, brown hair.

"Right time, right man I guess," Laura replied, emphasising the word 'man', to let him know that she didn't want her first time to be with some fumbling, inexperienced boy.

When he paused for a moment, Laura's fears and embarrassment temporarily got the better of her as she worried he wasn't interested in her because of her inexperience. "I'm sorry - this was a mistake," she mumbled hurriedly as she went to walk out of the bedroom.

Alex however, reached out and grabbed her hand and looking at her intently, said softly, "No it wasn't."

Laura looked back at him, a smile crossing her face as he pulled her back into his arms. “Are you sure though?” he asked, his eyes searching hers as he brushed a stray hair off her face.

Laura nodded then kissed him and said, “Answer your question?”

He smiled back at her. “Yes, I guess it does.”

“I’m glad you told me though,” he went on as he gave her a meaningful look. “A girl’s first time should be something special.”

With that he led her over to the bed. He sat down with her standing in front of him between his legs. He smiled at her reassuringly as he reached up and slowly lowered the straps of her dress, while Laura melted at his touch. As the top of her dress came down she blushed a little self-consciously as she was by no means overly endowed.

“You’re beautiful Laura,” Alex brushed her self-doubts aside with a touch of his hand, as he cupped her breasts and she struggled to stand still, her breath catching in her throat. She had never been touched like this before – it was nothing like Marty Klopman’s clumsy fumbling which had done nothing for her. She felt like she was coming alive for the first time.

His eyes never leaving hers, he reached around and undid her bra and then gently took it off. Laura closed her eyes, savouring the moment. When he pulled her closer to him and his kisses started trailing down her neck and lower she couldn’t help the moan that escaped her lips. With that he lay back on the bed, pulling her on top of him, the movement encouraging her somewhat as she began some touching of her own, finishing unbuttoning his shirt as his mouth found hers. Alex chuckled a little as she ran her hands over his chest, suspecting there was a little firecracker waiting to be let loose there.

With that thought in mind he pulled her even closer to him, their kisses deepening and as Laura felt the unmistakable proof of his arousal pressing against her she felt both thrilled and a little nervous. Alex felt her tense up a little so he whispered reassuringly, “Relax – we’ll take it slow. I’m not going to do anything until you’re ready,” as he ran a hand through her chestnut hair. At his words she found herself relaxing, as she focused on the feelings he was stirring in her, every kiss and caress setting her aflame.

Eventually Alex rolled them over, his hand caressing her calf, then her thigh and then higher, as Laura felt herself craving his touch. He pulled her dress off and then feasted his eyes on her, a sexy smile crossing his face as he undid his belt buckle then pulled his jeans off. Laura gulped a little as she took in the sight of him clad only in his underwear, her ‘crush’ suddenly flaring into full blown lust.

As he observed where her heated gaze was directed he gently took her hand in his. “Touch me Laura,” he whispered as she did as he asked, not quite believing what she was doing. She had never touched a man or a boy for that matter like this and she was a little unsure what to do. Alex then pulled his briefs off as Laura tried not to stare as she took in the sight of him fully naked, and he placed her hand on him again, showing her what to do. His own hand began caressing her in the same way as he pushed her underwear down and she gasped at the feel of his hand on her as he slowly and expertly aroused her.

As he laid her back on the bed Laura closed her eyes, her breath becoming a little ragged. She had never felt anything like this before – it felt like a wave was building inside her that was going to crash any minute. She felt herself instinctively moving against Alex's hand, wanting, needing more of him as he kissed her passionately and she ran a hand through his hair. When he momentarily pulled away from her to grab something out of his bedside drawer she keenly felt the absence of his body, momentarily wondering why he had pulled away, but then as she saw what was in his hand it dawned on her.

After a moment he covered her body with his but before he went any further he looked her in the eye and asked "Are you okay?". Her voice momentarily failing her, she nodded as he pushed forward. She felt a brief instant of pain as he entered her gently and at her sharp intake of breath he stopped moving and looked down at her.

"Do you want me to stop?" he breathed, hoping she didn't, but at the same time not wanting to hurt her. Laura shook her head as she reached up and pulled his mouth down to hers and his hand found her most sensitive spot again as he started to move slowly, and after a while as her body adjusted to him, it began to feel good. Then really good, Laura thought as she found herself riding the crest of the wave again. And then she started to feel a tingling sensation that started at her toes and worked its way upward until she felt the wave of pleasure crashing over her, a cry of both surprise and ecstasy escaping her lips as Alex smiled and then followed her over the edge.

So that's what all the fuss is about, she thought to herself as she came back down to earth and a satisfied smile crossed her face. Wow! That's better than chocolate (which for Laura was saying something!), she mused as Alex rested his forehead on hers, his smile mirroring hers.

"So how was it for you Laura?" he asked, although he had an idea.

A cheeky dimpled grin crossed her face, her brown eyes sparkling as she replied, "That was..amazing.. thankyou."

"Well thank you for allowing me the honour of being your first," Alex stated with a smile as he kissed her then rolled over and pulled her into his arms, running a hand leisurely up and down her back. As Laura nestled into the warmth of his body she thought to herself, 'well I'm certainly getting an education at college.'

After laying in his arms for a while Laura began running a hand over Alex's chest, keen to repeat the experience. As her hand travelled a bit lower Alex caught it in one of his with a chuckle. "As much as I like that train of thought Laura, I think I'm going to need a minute or two here to recover," he stated as he gave her a meaningful look and smiled, marveling at this passionate young woman in his arms who he appeared to have lit a flame in. Laura flashed him a dimpled smile in return and chuckled a little herself. "Oh okay," she replied as she kissed him. Alex responded to her and before too long they were lost in each other again.

When they finally came back down to earth for the second time Laura decided she ought to be getting back to the dorm, realizing she hadn't really thought through this part of her plan and what happened afterwards.

"You can stay the night if you like," Alex offered but Laura smiled and shook her head.

“Thanks but I should get going – I’ve got an early class in the morning,” she replied as they both laughed a little at the irony of that.

“So do I if I recall,” Alex replied with a grin.

He offered to drive her back to the campus but Laura decided to get a cab instead, worrying a bit what people would think if they saw a professor dropping off a student at this late hour. Plus in some small way Laura wanted to finish this night as she had started it – on her own terms.

After she got dressed and called a cab Alex pulled her into his arms and kissed her goodnight. “I really enjoyed tonight Laura – I hope you did too,” he murmured with a grin, his eyes holding hers intently.

“Yes I certainly did – thank you,” Laura replied with a mischievous twinkle in her brown eyes.

“Maybe we can have another ‘study session’ sometime?” Alex asked as he kissed her again.

“Hmm maybe Professor Winters,” Laura replied with a laugh.

“Well the ‘student’ shows a great deal of promise,” he replied as he gave her a meaningful look. She smiled as she kissed him once more then turned to leave.

“Ah Laura,” Alex called after her.

“Yes Alex?”

“Don’t forget your book,” he laughed as he nodded to where her calculus book lay on the floor. Laura laughed and picked it up then left him with a smile.

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When she got back to her dorm room, Laura found the other girls from 4 East waiting up for her. “So.. don’t keep us in suspense – how was it?” Carly asked as the others nodded, looking at her expectantly.

“It was..good,” she replied, a coy smile crossing her face.

“Just good?” Barbara persisted.

At that an impish grin crossed Laura’s face. “Well are we talking about the first or the second time?”

At that the other girls all looked at her, somewhat astonished. “No way! Are you kidding me??” Judy asked as Laura’s grin got wider and she nodded and the other girls all squealed.

“C’mon Laura we need details,” Tess demanded as Laura shook her head.

“I told you before girls – I don’t like to kiss and tell. Now if you’ll excuse me I’m going to bed – I am a bit tired after all,” she replied with a mischievous giggle as the other girls groaned and threw pillows at her.

She grabbed the pillows and threw them back at them with a laugh saying, “I believe I won the bet ladies – you can pay me in the morning.”

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Laura continued her ‘study sessions’ for a while with Professor Winters, enjoying the excitement of sneaking off to his apartment or other places they wouldn’t get caught. Both of them knew the other members of the math faculty wouldn’t exactly approve of him ‘fraternising’ with a student and as he didn’t have tenure yet Alex wanted to play it safe.

Laura didn’t mind at first though – it was daring & romantic, although she didn’t fool herself by any means into thinking they were in love with each other or anything like that. It was a bit of fun and that was all. But as time went on she began to realise that she wanted more from a relationship - she wanted to be able to spend time with someone outside of the bedroom as well. So she broke it off with Alex – he was somewhat disappointed but he understood. It could never have really gone anywhere at any rate, not while she was his student.

“I’ll never forget you,” she told him with a grateful smile after the last night they spent together. “Nor I you,” he replied, smiling at the young girl whose passion and daring had amazed him somewhat. He didn’t know what she’d end up doing with her life but whatever it was he knew she’d be nothing short of spectacular at it. He had found, much to his delight, that once Laura Holt had set her sights on something she could be very, very determined...



## Chapter 3

There was also another man Laura encountered during her freshman year who was to have a profound effect on her, albeit in a different way to Alex Winters, who she would cross paths with again years later on a case. Her friend Carly who was studying journalism had mentioned one day that the well known reporter, Elliot Walsh, was going to be guest lecturing her class. Laura's ears pricked up at that as she had admired Elliott Walsh since the first time she had seen him reporting on tv from some exotic, dangerous locale. He was a hero to her of sorts.

So as she didn't have a class on at that time she accompanied Carly to the lecture. Laura sat entranced as Elliot spoke about the stories he'd covered and the places he'd been. It all sounded so exciting. She would always remember one of the things he said during the lecture which really had an impact on her- "A good reporter gives the facts, a great reporter understands their meaning." This mantra would serve her very well in her later years as a detective, as she sorted through the facts of a case to understand how they all fit together in order to solve the mystery.

As Elliott concluded the lecture Carly turned to her and said encouragingly, "You should go talk to him seeing as you're such a fan."

Although Laura wanted to talk to him and tell him how much she admired his work, she found her courage fleeting, so in awe of him as she was. So instead she chickened out, something she always regretted, until fate gave her another chance years later to tell him how much she admired him and his work, and what an impact his words had had on her outlook on a lot of things.

For months after Elliot's lecture Laura dreamed of becoming a reporter and flying off to places like Tangier or Macau on some story, wherever the news took her. Becoming a hard hitting investigative journalist, always digging up facts and putting them together to tell a story. But unfortunately as she was on a maths scholarship her dreams of being a reporter were much more romantic than realistic. Still the dream stayed with her for a long time..

## Chapter 4

When she looked back over them in later years, Laura's college years seemed to have gone by very quickly in a whirlwind of study and hard work, combined with a lot of fun and friendship as well as her fair share of romance. By the time her four years at Stanford were up that green, naïve freshman she had been had matured into a strong, independent young woman, ready to take on the next chapter of her life and looking forward to her future with a mixture of excitement and determination.

Her strong work ethic had paid off resulting in her graduating summa cum laude. The Math Department were so impressed by her results they offered her a place in the faculty which she was flattered by but nevertheless turned down. A life of academia didn't really appeal to Laura – she longed for excitement and adventure. Although she did have a laugh to herself at the thought of becoming a calculus professor and taking on some young freshman for some 'study sessions' as Professor Winters had done for her. She had certainly learnt a few things at college and math wasn't the only thing! He had taken up a position at MIT when she was in her junior year but she knew she would never forget him – she even kept the glasses as a memento.

The night before graduation the girls from 4 East got together for one final fling before going their separate ways. Barbara was going into child psychology, Carly into tv journalism, Tess was continuing to study towards her dream of becoming a neurosurgeon and Judy had secured a role at a stockbroking firm.

"So Laura what are you going to do?" Barbara asked as they discussed their future plans over a few drinks. Laura smiled at her friends, wondering how they were going to react to her news.

She had tossed around a few ideas for her future career before making her decision – one that she reflected she had her grandmother to thank for really. When she was six her beloved grandmother, who she had been very close to, had been looking for a ring she had lost. Seeing her grandmother's distress at misplacing the ring which Laura's late grandfather had given to her, she offered to help her find it. Even at that tender age Laura had a determination about her which often drove her mother up the wall, but which meant that once she started something she wouldn't give up until she'd finished it.

It took her a few hours but eventually she found the ring after retracing her grandmother's steps that day and weighing up the possibilities of the most likely place it could be, putting the clues together just like she put jigsaw puzzles together. She remembered beaming with pride as her grandmother had given her a quarter for finding it, saying with a warm smile, "Oh Laura thank you sweetheart- you clever girl you! You mark my words Abigail this girl is going to make something of herself!"

With her grandmother's words in her head Laura announced to her friends, "I'm going to be a private investigator. I've been offered an apprenticeship at Havenhurst Detective Agency."

Somewhat shocked looks crossed her friends faces. "A private investigator? Isn't that a little dangerous?" Judy asked, not quite believing what she'd heard.

"It can be I guess – but that's what makes it exciting," Laura replied, her brown eyes lighting up at the thought. "Anyway I can handle myself okay," she added confidently.

"Well how are you going to chase down criminals and the like? I mean there's nothing of you!" Tess asked with a laugh as Laura felt herself getting a little frustrated at their less than encouraging response to her choice of future career.

"Oh she'll just tackle them like I'm sure she did Professor Winters," Carly commented cheekily as she winked at Laura and despite herself Laura found herself laughing with the rest of them.

"So you really want to do this?" Barbara asked as Laura nodded. "Yes I really want to do this – in fact my dream is to one day open my own agency," she stated determinedly.

"Well if anyone can do it you can Laura," Judy admitted with a smile and a fair degree of admiration as Laura smiled gratefully at her.

"But how will you juggle that with having a husband and family?" Barbara asked.

Laura paused for a moment before replying. "Well I guess I'll cross that bridge if and when I come to it – I don't see why a woman can't have a career and a family as well," she stated adamantly. "Anyway I'm not planning on settling down any time soon - I want to build my career first, be self-sufficient. I don't want to have to rely on a man for my livelihood," she added with a determined set to her jaw.

"I'm with you Laura – I'm having too much fun to settle for just one guy yet," Carly laughed mischievously. "Unlike Barbara here who's practically married," she added as Barbara smiled – she had been going steady with her boyfriend for the past two years.

"Okay speaking of men, let's do 'Describe your perfect guy', one last time," Tess suggested. It was a game the girls had indulged in every so often over the years, each of them describing their 'perfect man' – both looks and character- often with hilarious results as their descriptions, depending on the amount of alcohol they'd imbibed, often got quite 'detailed.' "I'll go first," Tess added as she started describing her perfect guy.

"Oh c'mon Tess you're just describing John Travolta!" Laura laughed, knowing her friend had been crazy about the actor since they'd all gone to see Saturday Night Fever a few months before.

"Well he's hot!" Tess laughed in reply then retorted. "Well c'mon then Laura – it's your turn. What would your perfect guy be like?"

“Hmm..” Laura mused. “Well he’d be honest, a man of integrity, compassionate and with a desire to help others” she started as Carly rolled her eyes.

“Boring!” she interjected with a laugh. “C’mon how about the good stuff – what would he look like and more importantly what would he be like in the sack?”

At that a cheeky dimpled grin crossed Laura’s face. “Well I think he’d be tall, dark and handsome..”

“Eye colour?” Judy asked with a grin.

“Mmm..blue.. definitely blue,” Laura replied. “And he’d have an air of mystery about him,” she went on with a mischievous gleam in her eyes.

“Ooh sounds dreamy,” Barbara enthused.

“Oh yes for sure,” Laura replied. “And as for the sack – well he’d be amazing. He’d be the sort of guy who could make your toes curl just with a kiss,” she continued, quite enjoying her fantasy. Of course it was just a fantasy she had thought at the time – men like that just don’t walk through your door, well so she had thought.

“Well if you ever meet Mr Perfect send him my way,” Carly laughed.

“Sorry he’s mine – you can’t have him,” Laura replied with a laugh of her own thinking to herself if that dream ever came true she would never let him go...

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