

Ecstasy

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*Dedicated to all young minds
and the choice not to let
drugs fuck them up.*

CHAPTER 1

I am just 17 and my life is over. Head spinning, hands shaking, I need to throw up again. The lights are so bright I can only squint. I can hear people passing, but they're just blurs.

Sitting here, sweat carving lines through my make-up, I feel as if everyone is judging me. The seats either side of me are empty. People are standing, rather than sit next to me – the junkie. Funny, isn't it, that I'm drowning in a sea of people, but if I died in front of them, it'd be alone.

I came here with Mai-Ling but they took her away, through those clear plastic swing

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doors. She was totally out of it. I thought she had just partied too hard when she fell on the footpath and started throwing up. But then blood started trickling from her ears and nose and I panicked. I got her here as fast as I could but it was hard, no-one would help. I haven't seen her since and nobody's telling me what is happening.

You think I am self-pitying. You're thinking I'm another spoilt rich kid whose daddy gave her everything. Shit, they called the cops before they called my father!

The only time anyone comes near me is to question me again. They want to know everything but I can hardly think, let alone focus on what they are saying. I'm still too smashed to concentrate and they know it, but they keep hammering me. I don't care what they want to know, I just keep on back at them: "Is Mai-Ling OK? Is my friend alright?"

They act like they don't hear me.

On and on they go with the same fucking questions, “What did your friend take? What did she drink? When did she start losing consciousness?”

I keep saying to them, I’ve already told you everything – just leave me alone!

Fuck, I’m going to throw up again!

It’s been half an hour since I spewed but my stomach won’t settle. My father is still not here, even though I’ve called him like a million times. I have no-one and I’m scared.

“Carrie Jones?” a voice startles me from behind. As I turn I am face to face with two cops. I can hear the whole waiting room exhale. The cavalry has arrived! Someone to take the druggie away.

“Carrie?”

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They want me to talk to them but the room is spinning and I can only hold my head in my hands and nod.

“I am Constable Adams and this is Constable Cummings; we need to ask you about what happened tonight.”

Taking my hands from my face, the neon lights burn. I see a woman who could only be three or four years older than I am. The realisation is starting to hit me that I’m in a shit-load of trouble and things have gone way too far. If the police are here then something really terrible must have happened to Mai-Ling. Or am I still tripping and this is not real. But it feels real – too real.

I swallow hard to stop the tears, “Is Mai-Ling . . .?”

The Constable’s face is blank as she glances at her partner. It is as if they are talking in some kind of silent code to each other.

“Is she alright?”

Still no answer.

“Is she?” I am screaming now, I need to know! “For Christ’s sake, will someone tell me what is happening with Mai-Ling?”

My words have poured themselves into my tears and I can hardly catch my breath. “She was just pinging, right? You know, she’s just high. She’ll be okay now that she’s spewed, right?”

The female cop sits down next to me and looks me straight in the eye. She’s freaking me out. My heart is racing and sweat is pouring down my face. My hair is dripping wet and I can’t stop shaking. She is still just staring at me like she’s searching for a way to break the terrible news to me.

She puts her hand on my shoulder. “Mai-Ling is still unconscious. This is very serious. We don’t know yet . . .”

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I feel like I have been hit in the guts. “What do you mean it’s serious? She hardly took anything!”

The other cop stands and holds out his hand. “Let’s go and sit down somewhere quieter, Carrie.”

“Let me see Mai-Ling. You can make the doctors let me see her, I know you can.”

“The best way to help Mai-Ling at the moment is to tell us everything that happened tonight.”

“I’ve told them everything. I don’t know anything else.”

“I know but we need to ask you some more things.”

“What things?”

“Come on, let’s find a quieter place.”

This guy is making out like he wants to help me but I don’t trust him. My father

has told me a lot about how the police get people to say things which get you into trouble. He's got a shit-load of stories about how they pretend to be your friend but really they're just trying to get you to say something bad. I don't trust them.

"I need my father to be here. He's a lawyer. I can't speak to you until he's here."

They stiffen the minute I say "lawyer". They're going to start pressuring me now, I can tell.

The woman cop is smiling at me with this fake I-care-about-you smile. "Carrie, Mai-Ling's mother is on her way. Don't you think she deserves to know what happened?"

"I already told the doctors what she took."

"You told them she had a tablet at a party. What was it?"

"I already told them."

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“You need to tell us.”

“Fuck! It was an ecstasy tablet. Okay?”

“Who did she get it from?”

“From this guy at the party. He had lots. Everyone was taking them. If there was something wrong we’d all be sick, right?”

The male cop keeps looking straight at me and asks his next question. “What’s the name of the person who gave Mai-Ling the tablet?”

“I need to see my father! Where the *fuck* is my father?”

“I don’t know where your father is, but Carrie, we need to know now. You want to help Mai-Ling, don’t you?”

“Of course I fucking want to help Mai-Ling. She’s my best friend! What do you think I am?”

“Did you take one of the tablets as well?”

“No.”

“You took something though.”

“What does that matter?”

The female cop stares at me again like she’s my mother. Stupid bitch, she thinks she’s so cool in her uniform and that shiny badge.

“I took a half, okay. I told Mai-Ling to only take a half. She hadn’t taken it before and I told her to just take a half. But she didn’t listen!”

“Can you tell us what happened from the beginning? From when you got to the party?”

“I need my father here first.”

The woman cop looks over at her partner. He is shaking his head. I hear him whisper

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something like, “Go steady on her, she’s just a kid.” The woman cop is glaring back and I can’t make out what she’s saying. The guy cop sits down next to me.

“Look, I know this is hard for you. Your friend is really sick and you’re feeling pretty sick yourself. We’re not trying to make things harder for you.”

“I need to call my father.”

As I fumble for my mobile phone it starts to ring. “Dad?”

It’s not him but his girlfriend, Anne.

“I need to speak to my dad.”

She is telling me that he is out at the moment but she will get him to call me the minute he gets back.

“But I need him to come now . . .”

She has already hung up. She treats me like I’m nothing. Fuck! I’m in the hospital

for Christ's sake and his girlfriend is screening his calls! I want to cry but I need to scream.

The woman cop is looking at me like she actually understands. "Come on, let's go to the Ladies and you can wash your face."

The mention of water reminds me how thirsty I am. Now, I cannot think of anything else.

"I need water."

She brings me a plastic cup. I scull it and am desperate for more. She brings me one cup after another. It's like I'm a bloody camel.

I'm still drinking when a woman runs into the waiting room screaming Mai-Ling's name. She stops dead, looks at me and my whole stomach knots. It is Mai-Ling's mum and she looks like a train wreck, clothes thrown over pyjamas. Jesus, she is walking over to me, face screwed up. She has no idea.